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Inspiration and Authority in the Middle Ages

Prophets and their Critics from Scholasticism to Humanism

BRIAN FITZGERALD



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Inspiration and Authority in the Middle Ages

*Prophets and their Critics from
Scholasticism to Humanism*

BRIAN FITZGERALD

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Abbreviations

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, ed. J. Quasten and J. C. Plumpe (1946–)
<i>AFH</i>	<i>Archivum franciscanum historicum</i>
<i>AHDLMA</i>	<i>Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age</i>
BML	Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana
BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
Borgnet	Albert the Great, <i>Opera omnia</i> , ed. A. Borgnet, 38 vols (Paris 1890–9)
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis (Turnhout, 1967–)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnhout, 1954–)
<i>CHLC</i>	<i>The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism</i> , vol. 2: <i>The Middle Ages</i> , ed. A. J. Minnis and I. R. Johnson (Cambridge, 2005)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna, 1866–)
<i>De civ.</i>	Augustine, <i>De civitate dei</i>
<i>De doct.</i>	Augustine, <i>De doctrina christiana</i>
<i>De Gen. litt.</i>	Augustine, <i>De Genesi ad litteram</i>
Geyer	Albert the Great, <i>Opera omnia</i> , ed. B. Geyer et al., 37 vols (Münster 1951–)
<i>HR</i>	<i>Historiarum Rolandini, [etc.], Albertini Mussati, de gestis Henrici VII. Caes. & alia eiusdem opera</i> (Venice, 1635)
<i>IMU</i>	<i>Italia medioevale e umanistica</i>
<i>In Hiez.</i>	Gregory the Great, <i>Homiliae in Hiezechielem prophetam</i>
Leonine	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII edita</i> , 26 vols (Rome, 1882–)
<i>MEFRMA</i>	<i>Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen Age—temps modernes</i>
<i>MLTC</i>	<i>Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c.1100–c.1375: The Commentary Tradition</i> , ed. A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott (Oxford, 1991)
<i>MOPH</i>	<i>Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum historica</i> , ed. Institutum Historicum Fratrum Praedicatorum, 26 vols (Louvain/Rome/Paris, 1896–)
<i>OOB</i>	<i>S. Bonaventurae opera omnia</i> , ed. P. Bernardini, 10 vols (Quaracchi, 1882–1902)
<i>Opusc. theo.</i>	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Opuscula theologica</i> , ed. R. Verardo and R. Spiazzi, 2 vols (Turin, 1954)
Parma	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Opera omnia</i> , 25 vols (Parma, 1852–73)
PL	Patrologia Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1844–64)
<i>RRTC</i>	<i>Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century</i> , ed. R. L. Benson, G. Constable, and C. Lanham (Oxford, 1982)

<i>SBO</i>	<i>Sancti Bernardi opera</i> , ed. J. Leclercq et al., 9 vols (Rome, 1957–74)
<i>SC</i>	Sources chrétiennes (Paris, 1941–)
<i>SCG</i>	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa contra gentiles</i>
<i>SEP</i>	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Super Epistolas S. Pauli lectura</i> , ed. R. Cai, 2 vols, 8th edn (Turin, 1953)
<i>SRG</i>	Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum
<i>ST</i>	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa theologiae</i>
<i>Super Sent.</i>	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Scriptum super libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi episcopi Parisiensis</i>
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>

Notes on Sources

I have followed the orthography of my sources, with two exceptions: in Latin words, I have generally used ‘i’ instead of ‘j’, and I have used ‘v’ for consonantal ‘u’. I have also inserted modern punctuation and expanded manuscript abbreviations.

When I provide Latin words and phrases within the body of the text, I normally use italics when I am not reproducing the original exactly (for instance when the original word is in the accusative case and I provide the nominative) or to highlight central words or concepts. I use quotation marks for longer extracts or less common phrases, particularly when I am reproducing the original exactly.

When citing from a large series such as the *Patrologia Latina*, I have listed volumes in Arabic numerals. When citing from a single work divided into a few volumes, I use lower-case Roman numerals.

I refer to the titles of biblical books by the Vulgate name, for instance 1 Kings rather than 1 Samuel. All Vulgate references rely on R. Weber (ed.), *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgata versionem*, 4th edn (Stuttgart, 1994).

Introduction

I.

Prophecy's place as a defining feature of the religious culture of the Latin Middle Ages has been clear for some time. The mid-twentieth-century historian Marjorie Reeves wrote that 'only when intelligent and educated men ceased to take prophecy seriously' did the Middle Ages truly end.¹ During the medieval period a belief flourished that important events, even those unfolding in the present moment, had been and could be foretold, whether by the Bible or by special visionaries. Reeves had in mind particularly the legacy of the twelfth-century abbot Joachim of Fiore, whose predictions of an impending new and final age of the Holy Spirit gave distinct historical shape to the future.

Important as Joachim's legacy was, however, when we look closely at what medieval people took seriously as prophecy and at those whom they accorded special authority as prophets, another story begins to emerge in which prophecy takes on new significance in surprising ways. To comprehend this story, we must expand our understanding of prophecy beyond the notion of predictions or gnomic utterances, which the word often evokes today. When we do so, we see that 'prophecy' in the Middle Ages actually had a multitude of meanings and that this very multiplicity played a crucial role in some of the most important religious and cultural developments of the time.

We can get a sense of the wide range of meanings prophecy had by considering the popular mid-thirteenth-century dictionary written by William Brito, an English Franciscan living in Paris. Drawing from scriptural examples, Brito gives the following meanings for *prophetare*, 'to prophesy': prediction, historiography, reporting what is happening somewhere else, reciting other prophecies, singing praise to God, teaching,

¹ *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1969), p. 508.

being a spokesperson, and prefiguring events by one's actions.² Those who theorized about prophecy were well aware of the difficulties this wide semantic field produced: 'under the name of "prophetic light" lie equivocations', wrote the thirteenth-century theologian Peter John Olivi.³

This book chronicles the attempts of medieval thinkers from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries to wrestle with the ambiguities of prophecy. During this period, the nature and implications of prophetic inspiration became a major area of contention, especially when scholastic theologians, with their particular techniques and standards of rationality, sought to make systematic sense of inspired speech and knowledge.⁴ Why do such attempts matter? They matter in large part because prophecy was a crucial—if not *the* crucial—locus of debates over sacred authority in the medieval Church. 'Authority' or *auctoritas* means here both legitimate justification for one's social role and, in a larger sense, the claim for one's words to be trusted.⁵ The exemplary Old Testament prophets were authoritative insofar as their words came from God. What, then, of the other types of prophecy Brito listed? Did they likewise derive from God a sacred authority?⁶

To answer these questions required significant epistemological considerations. If prophecy did not only mean prediction, one had to explain the 'equivocations' of prophecy, and to unravel the different types of words and acts given the same name. Many of the descriptions used in the Middle Ages for prophecy would fall today under the heading of 'inspiration', a word with its own array of definitions, describing influences both divine and natural. Medieval writers, too, used *inspiratio* in a range of

² *Summa Britonis*, ed. L. W. Daly and B. A. Daly, ii (Padua, 1975), p. 604: 'futura predicere', 'preterita narrare', 'facta absens nuntiare', 'prophetias recitare', 'laudes deo canere', 'docere', 'prolocutoris officium exercere', 'prefigurare'.

³ *Quodlibeta* (Venice, 1509) I.13, fol. 5v: 'sub nomine luminis prophetici latent equivocationes'.

⁴ I use the term 'scholastic' as a synonym for 'academic', and also to describe thinkers of this era who sought a 'scientific and rational penetration of the faith' according to their conception of scientific rigour. See U. G. Leinsle, *Introduction to Scholastic Theology*, trans. M. Miller (Washington, DC, 2010), pp. 2, 10–11.

⁵ See E. Marmursztejn, *L'Autorité des maîtres* (Paris, 2007), pp. 10–27; and M.-D. Chenu, *Towards Understanding St Thomas*, trans. A. M. Landry and D. Hughes (Chicago, 1964), pp. 129ff. Thus, *auctoritas* is not identical with the wielding of power (*potestas*), though there was certainly overlap. I am not examining the strict sense of theological *auctoritas*, i.e. the criteria for determining which texts became formally part of scholastic commentary tradition: see A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia, PA, 2010), pp. 10–15.

⁶ By 'sacred', I intend a general definition such as Glenn Olsen's: the sacred professes 'God-connectedness', while the 'secular' is 'an area of life capable of being understood in its own right'. See 'Cultural Dynamics: Secularization and Sacralization', in Wethersfield Institute (ed.), *Christianity and Western Civilization* (San Francisco, 1995), pp. 100–1.

contexts, though generally the word meant the inner manner by which God made something known.⁷ Yet 'prophecy' remained the model for understanding such revelations and asserting their importance. Did all these varieties of prophecy deserve equal credence? Were they all forms of the same inspiration, or was 'prophecy' in fact a misleading label? Medieval academic rationality faced serious difficulties in confronting a phenomenon of religious experience exceedingly hard to categorize.⁸

Discussions of prophecy were also deeply bound up with medieval conceptions of *texts*, of genres of writing and the structures of knowledge that underlie them. Medieval readers accepted the authority of a text differently according to its genre. But medieval literary genres were imbued with a fluidity akin to that of prophecy itself. The shifting relationship, therefore, of rhetoric, history, and poetry throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries affected greatly the sorts of truth claims medieval writers could make.⁹ This in turn influenced the types of texts people were willing to recognize as inspired.

Medieval answers to questions about prophecy required, furthermore, serious reflection on the Church's place in history. What relationship did the inspiration seen in the scriptural past have to the Church of the present, a Church which claimed to be guided by the Holy Spirit in its teaching capacity?¹⁰ A standard medieval method of comparing past and present was typology, seeing similar figures or institutions recapitulated over time.¹¹ According to Christian thinkers, the primary role of prophets in the Bible was the prediction of Christ's coming. With the Incarnation, however, there had been a distinct historical shift. Did past models of prophecy, then, have any present relevance? What would revelation or

⁷ Y. Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, trans. M. Naseby and T. Rainborough (London, 1966), pp. 128–9.

⁸ Rather than imposing my own distinctions on the fluid terms of the medieval debate, I use 'prophecy' and 'inspiration' without strict differentiation, except when highlighting significant distinctions found in the sources, or contexts in which 'inspiration' was not described as 'prophetic'. Some modern theologians have attempted to separate inspiration and prophecy by emphasizing, e.g., a prophet's awareness of the divine impulse, but this is a distinction not made by medieval theologians. See L. Alonso-Schökel, 'Inspiration', in K. Rahner et al. (eds), *Sacramentum Mundi*, iii (New York, 1968), p. 147. For a recent reminder of the importance of the relationship between rationality and religion, see D. d'Avray, *Medieval Religious Rationalities* (Cambridge, 2010).

⁹ M. S. Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400–1500* (Manchester, 2011), ch. 4.

¹⁰ For the medieval understanding of the Spirit's role in the life of the Church, see Congar, *Tradition*, pp. 130–7.

¹¹ H.-W. Goetz, 'The Concept of Time in the Historiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', in G. Althoff et al. (eds), *Medieval Concepts of the Past* (Washington, DC, 2002), p. 164.

inspiration in the current age look like? How would one determine that inspiration's authenticity or authority?¹²

The stakes for these questions were high. If 'prophecy' was everything William Brito said it was, then it could be claimed—and indeed at various points *was* claimed—by preachers, teachers, mystics, and even writers of apparently secular works of history or poetry. Theologians had to respond to powerful assertions of divine inspiration and prophetic authority. Some of these assertions were external to Christendom, embodied particularly in the growing confrontations with Islam and its own prophet. More immediately of concern, however, for most Catholic theologians of this period were claims which they viewed as internal challenges to the unity of the Church and its institutional structures.

But when scholastic thinkers sought to understand prophecy and to determine the boundaries of sacred texts and sacred authority, they were reflecting at the same time on their own growing role as the intellectual power of Christian society—a power referred to as *studium*. The role of *studium*, of those who have been called 'medieval intellectuals',¹³ was distinct from—though often intertwined with—the authority of a second social and ecclesiastical element: the sacramental priesthood and the hierarchy of bishops, known as *sacerdotium*.¹⁴ Theoretical discussions of prophecy therefore help reveal the self-conception of medieval theologians.

Significantly, many defenders of institutional unity also claimed the mantle of the prophet. While keeping other challenges at bay, theologians began legitimating a moderate form of inspiration that justified their own *studium* through ordinary activities such as teaching and preaching, activities which were often grouped under the name of 'prophecy'. These non-predictive prophetic practices fostered new understandings of the relationship between inspiration and authority. My argument is that, as theologians attempted to determine the limits of prophetic privilege, and to shape prophecy for their own purposes, they actually opened space for claims of divine insight to proliferate in those ordinary functions, and in a way that went beyond their control. This proliferation, as part of a broad stream of inspiration, is the central thread of this book.

¹² These questions still occupy contemporary theologians. Consider the Second Vatican Council's debate over whether revelation had closed with the apostles, discussed in N. C. Hvidt, *Christian Prophecy* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 3–6, 17–18, 204–5.

¹³ See J. Le Goff, *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*, trans. T. Fagan (Cambridge, MA, 1993); and A. Boureau, 'Intellectuals in the Middle Ages, 1957–95', in M. Rubin (ed.), *The Work of Jacques Le Goff and the Challenges of Medieval History* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 145–55.

¹⁴ *Studium* and *sacerdotium* were part of what by the thirteenth century was a standard division of powers, the third of which was political—*regnum*: H. Grundmann, 'Sacerdotium – Regnum – Studium: Zur Wertung der Wissenschaft im 13. Jahrhundert', in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 34 (1951–52), pp. 5–21.

II.

The relationship of sacred to secular, the nature of religious inspiration, and of the claims to authority that flow from it—all these are still relevant issues, but modern scholars have only lately come to recognize the importance of medieval prophecy for understanding them more deeply. Marjorie Reeves's and Robert Lerner's studies of predictive or apocalyptic prophecy helped to reveal its considerable role in the Middle Ages,¹⁵ but despite (or perhaps because of) prophecy's centrality, scholars of medieval intellectual and cultural history have yet to document comprehensively its complexities, or medieval thinkers' attempts to confront those complexities.¹⁶ The significance of Joachim of Fiore's eschatological prophecy has been well established, yet the crowning of Joachim as a paradigmatic prophetic figure has also thrown into shadow a great deal of what was considered prophecy in the Middle Ages. Indifference to the future mattered as much as fascination with it.

Historians of medieval sanctity have been among the most attentive to the implications of prophecy's variety.¹⁷ Claudio Leonardi in particular has emphasized that the fluidity of prophetic categories could serve to break down traditional polarizations such as 'popular' and 'official' sanctity.¹⁸ Nonetheless, Leonardi sees prophecy as 'critical of power', a definition rooted in Max Weber's model of the prophet as an extraordinary individual whose charismatic leadership is ultimately turned by priests into institutional routine, a model which usually places the 'prophetic' on the side of the reformer in opposition to established ways.¹⁹ Yet, prophecy

¹⁵ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*; Lerner, *The Powers of Prophecy* (Berkeley, CA, 1983).

¹⁶ Thus, Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton acknowledge medieval prophecy's 'multifarious' meanings but focus on political prediction: 'The Language of History: Past and Future in Prophecy', in B. Taithe and T. Thornton (eds), *Prophecy: The Power of Inspired Language in History, 1300–2000* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 1–2. Political prophecy is also the subject of L. Coote (ed.), *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England* (York, 2000).

¹⁷ e.g., in André Vauchez's *Saints, prophètes et visionnaires* (Paris, 1999).

¹⁸ C. Leonardi, 'Committenze agiografiche nel Trecento', in V. Moleta (ed.), *Patronage and Public in the Trecento* (Florence, 1986), p. 38. Leonardi considers this binary to be a weakness in Vauchez's account. Some literary scholars of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have also explored discourse where the prophet does not predict but rather speaks on God's behalf: D. Watt, *Secretaries of God: Women Prophets in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 1997); and M. Bose, 'Complaint, Prophecy, and Pastoral Care in the Fifteenth Century: Thomas Gascoigne's *Liber Veritatum*', in C. Gunn and C. Innes-Parker (eds), *Texts and Traditions of Medieval Pastoral Care* (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 149–62.

¹⁹ 'Committenze agiografiche', p. 38. Leonardi's focus is on 'political' prophecy, by which he means inspired saints such as Catherine of Siena seeking to effect practical action.

became the common currency for all sorts of theoretically opposed categories: not only 'official' and 'popular', or 'intellectual' and 'mystic', but also 'institutional' and 'reformist'. Not all medieval prophets were critical of power.

Prophecy was indeed a common currency, but this also led to arguments which could pit competing groups against each other, often in unequal ways. Controversies, for instance, over women as preachers, prophets, and priests emerged during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries precisely because the parameters of sacramental, revelatory, and intellectual power were up for debate.²⁰ Although the focus of my study is not specifically on debates about gender, I draw on them where they inform more general discussions of inspiration and authority. There are also ways in which the wider transformations described in this book can provide context for those controversies. Wendy Anderson has already pointed towards at least one area where this may be useful: the 'discernment of spirits', part of a process used by theologians to assess the sanctity of allegedly inspired women.²¹ As Anderson has recently insisted, the central issue in debates about discernment of spirits is not gender per se but authority.²² Understanding how the parameters of sacred authority developed thus becomes crucial.

III.

This book begins with the early twelfth century and ends with the early fourteenth. This diachronic approach is necessary to understand crucial

For Weber's account, see *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. E. Fischoff (Boston, 1963), chs. 4–5. The Weberian usage of 'prophetic' can also be seen in, e.g., John O'Malley's archetypal 'prophetic culture', 'the culture of alienation, of protest': *Four Cultures of the West* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), pp. 6–7.

²⁰ See J. Coakley, 'Women's Textual Authority and the Collaboration of Clerics', in A. J. Minnis and R. Voaden (eds), *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition, c. 1100–c. 1500* (Turnhout, 2010), p. 83; and A. J. Minnis, 'De impedimento sexus: Women's Bodies and Medieval Impediments to Female Ordination', in P. Biller and A. J. Minnis (eds), *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body* (Rochester, NY, 1997), pp. 109–39.

²¹ Important works on the topic include D. Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ, 2004), and N. Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, 2003).

²² *The Discernment of Spirits: Assessing Visions and Visionaries in the Late Middle Ages* (Tübingen, 2011), pp. 5–7. Anderson is critical, for instance, of Caciola's approach in *Discerning Spirits*, with its focus on a 'practice of institutional mistrust' (p. 1), and of both Elliott and Caciola for assuming that any discussion of 'discernment' relates to the repression of women, when in fact 'discernment' was used with regard to men as well.

aspects of change (and stasis) within notions of prophetic inspiration, particularly because so much reflection on prophecy occurs in works of exegesis or scholastic treatises, where subtle variations may reveal their full implications only gradually. At the same time, I integrate close readings of influential texts with attention to wider contemporaneous social and cultural developments.²³ My argument, furthermore, depends on the diffusion of ideas beyond a small spectrum of learned thinkers, and so I also highlight less academic sources that helped this transmission. I am not setting out, however, to document *all* serious reflections on prophecy at the time; their number is vast. But I will draw out particular threads which reveal some of the most important effects of this period's debates over inspiration.

There are several reasons for beginning with the twelfth century. First of all, the late fourteenth century has become a focal point for scholarly examinations of prophecy,²⁴ but this has also obscured the complexity of medieval inspiration. The fourteenth century is when debates about divine revelation became more explicitly gendered and more closely bound up with concerns about demonic influence.²⁵ By looking first to the twelfth century, a more varied story of prophecy and inspiration can be considered: which paths were taken, and, just as significantly, which were not, which elements were combined, and which were not. The twelfth century was the beginning of real theological interest in and reflection on prophecy, for reasons discussed later in this Introduction. Accompanying this interest was a growth in historical consciousness and an expanding interest in discerning the lineaments of sacred (and secular) history.²⁶ At the same time, the discipline of academic theology was emerging, as was greater

²³ In particular, I am guided by Caroline Walker Bynum's insight that scholastic discussions, rather than debates in the abstract, are often attempts to find pragmatic solutions to pressing issues: *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York, 1995), p. 137.

²⁴ e.g. for Elliott (*Proving Woman*), Caciola (*Discerning Spirits*), Leonardi ('Commitenze agiografiche'), and Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. J. Birrell (New York, 1997).

²⁵ Anderson argues that scholarly discussions of discernment of spirits proceed from flawed assumptions that the concept is the same from the patristic period onward; to begin with the fourteenth century, she says, conceals 'multiplicity': *Discernment*, pp. 5–11. On prophecy and the demonic, see A. Boureau, *Satan the Heretic*, trans. T. Fagan (Chicago, 2006).

²⁶ On twelfth-century historical awareness, see P. Classen, 'Res Gestae, Universal History, Apocalypse', in *RRTC*, pp. 387–417.

²⁷ On theology in the twelfth century, see G. R. Evans, *Old Arts and New Theology* (Oxford, 1980); on proofs of sanctity, see A. Kleinberg, 'Proving Saints: Selection and Authentication of Saints in the Later Middle Ages', *Viator*, 20 (1989), pp. 188–9; on miracles, see B. Ward, 'Miracles in the Middle Ages', in G. Twelftree (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Miracles* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 155–6.

concern during canonization processes for a proper assessment of sanctity and the distinctions between natural and miraculous influences.²⁷

The first two chapters of this book rely on close readings of key texts to make the case for a conception of prophecy in the twelfth century laden with tensions. In Chapter One, I focus on the influential theologian Hugh of St Victor, a canon regular at the Abbey of St Victor in Paris who bridged the monastic and scholastic worlds. I argue that Hugh broadened and naturalized the prophetic model, closely linking prophecy with both general historical awareness and contemplative experience. Chapter Two examines developments within the tradition of scholastic biblical exegesis. In this regard, the vast number of medieval commentaries on the prophetic books of the Old Testament are valuable sources, and I refer to many of them throughout the book, but in this chapter, I focus on the Psalms, a *locus classicus* for discussions of non-apocalyptic prophetic knowledge. Beginning with the commentaries of twelfth-century theologians Gilbert of Poitiers and Peter Lombard, I emphasize two important elements that developed over the course of that century and the next: first, an attentiveness to the 'literary' qualities of prophetic and sacred language, and secondly, the appropriation by professional exegetes of the sacred authority of the interpreted texts.

The issues raised by twelfth-century enquiry were the subject of thirteenth-century attempts at resolution. Full-fledged treatises devoted exclusively to prophecy emerged in that century, treatises which sharpened key definitions and drew more clearly the lines of debate. The dangers associated with unauthorized claims of inspiration also began to take more serious form, giving greater urgency to theoretical reflections. Chapters Three and Four examine these theoretical treatises and their relationship to wider cultural manifestations of prophetic inspiration. I highlight the polemical nature of many treatises by examining how arguments about prophecy that developed in opposition to Islam were also used to confront the challenge of apocalyptic or eschatological prophecy as promoted by the heirs of Joachim of Fiore, including Franciscans such as Peter John Olivi who saw signs of an impending new age of history that would transform the institutional Church. As a result, the formation of a distinctive Dominican tradition of theorizing about prophecy comes to the fore, with examinations of Hugh of St Cher, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas. This tradition relied on assumptions shared by many non-Dominicans, but the Dominicans increasingly became the guarantors of ecclesiastical orthodoxy and were thus invested in determining what boundaries could be put around sacred authority and supernatural inspiration without excluding the Holy Spirit from the contemporary Church. At the same time, Dominican discussions of preaching or theological understanding as contemporary manifestations of prophecy raised

questions about the relationship between natural and supernatural gifts. In the end, I argue, Dominican dismissals of predictive prophecy tamed inspiration in an attempt to weaken its challenges, but in doing so, they naturalized and diffused prophecy, making it much more difficult to say who was inspired and who was not.

The book concludes with the early fourteenth century for two main reasons. The first is that the rest of that century saw the rise of a distinct and dominant prophetic current via visionary mystics. This current is by no means unimportant, and it has been well treated by scholars.²⁸ What is missing is a perspective that sees the rise of mystics as but one among several forms of non-predictive, non-apocalyptic prophecy. These alternative forms are the particular focus of my study, and I show how they continued to be shaped by reactions to perceived threats from Joachimism. Before Pope John XXII's crackdown in the 1320s, Joachimism was markedly potent, so I am concerned to trace how theologians—up to the time of the early Avignon papacy—worked to reshape prophecy in light of that challenge.

The second reason for ending in the early fourteenth century is because those years reveal the emergence of an important alternative form of non-apocalyptic prophecy, that of the humanist poet. In 1315 and 1316, the Paduan diplomat, historian, and poet Albertino Mussato (1261–1329) engaged in a polemical exchange with a local Dominican theologian over the sacred nature of poetry. A series of such defences of 'poetic theology' followed over the course of the century, involving Francis Petrarch (1304–74), Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–75), and Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), all of whom spoke of poetry as inspired writing. The criticism, especially from scholastic quarters, that resulted from this elevation of poetry is one sign of the overlap of two attempts—theological and poetic—to clarify the nature of inspiration. The Paduan beginnings of this conflict reveal confusion about the relationship between scriptural or contemporary prophet and Christian poet. Were prophetic inspiration and literary inspiration the same thing?

By setting the origins of these 'humanist/scholastic' debates in relation to prophecy, I thus intend to connect theological considerations of inspiration to new assertions of prophetic authority that came from outside clerical or theological milieux. I look to poets rather than to mystics as one of the channels revealing a transformation of prophecy, not because mystics are irrelevant to this transformation but because I wish to

²⁸ e.g. B. McGinn, *The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism (1350–1500)* (New York, 2012); Vauchez, *Saints*, pp. 125–48, 162–74, 199–219; Leonardi, 'Committenze agiografiche', pp. 37–58.

emphasize that humanist scholars and poets were party to the same developments in medieval religious culture as theologians and visionaries.

Renaissance historians have examined these debates from the perspective of later trends, either as part of the reconciliation of classical and Christian culture or as the beginning of a split between scholastic and humanist principles that played out over the next two centuries regarding education and Christian formation.²⁹ Alastair Minnis, on the other hand, investigating from the other side, i.e. from earlier trends, has shown how these debates, rather than being solely dependent on the revival of classical ideas, emerge out of twelfth- and thirteenth-century literary theory.³⁰ Minnis has emphasized the connections between scholastic and humanist ideas, and the convergence of ways of reading sacred texts with ways of reading secular ones.³¹ For Minnis, Aristotelian theories of causation and a focus on the literal sense of Scripture helped medieval thinkers pay attention to the role of the human author as an authoritative contributor to the sacred text.³²

Minnis's ideas, while very useful in showing how to bridge the scholastic/humanist divide, are not sufficient to explain all aspects of the rise of humanist 'poetic theology' and its arguments for prophetic authority. Prophecy's strong connection to historical insight means that the dialogue between history and poetry, which persisted throughout the Middle Ages, needs to be brought more clearly into view.³³ In addition, prophecy's ties to sanctity and visions suggest the centrality of a broad stream of inspiration, that is, the diffusion of prophetic authority among a wide range of activities, which is a theme largely absent from Minnis's analysis of

²⁹ For discussion from the first perspective, see R. Witt, 'Coluccio Salutati and the Conception of the *Poeta Theologus* in the Fourteenth Century', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 30 (1977), pp. 538–63; C. Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought* (London, 1970), pp. 683–721, and *The Poet as Philosopher: Petrarch and the Formation of Renaissance Consciousness* (New Haven, CT, 1979), pp. 90–113. For the second perspective, see E. Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Cambridge, MA, 1995).

³⁰ *Authorship*, esp. pp. 211ff.

³¹ *MLTC*, pp. 6–11.

³² *Authorship*, pp. 28, 38–9, 75–82. Some of Minnis's arguments have in recent years faced challenges, though none that undermine his basic thesis. Christopher Ocker questions the firm link between literal exegesis and enhanced respect for human authorship: *Biblical Poetics Before Humanism and Reformation* (Cambridge, 2002), esp. p. 141 (to which Minnis responds in *Authorship*, p. xiii); Deborah Goodwin challenges the privileged place of the literal sense in the thirteenth century: 'Herbert of Bosham and the Horizons of Twelfth-Century Exegesis', *Traditio*, 58 (2003), pp. 138–41.

³³ See Kempshall's insistence on this continuous dialogue: *Rhetoric*, p. 550.

³⁴ Absent from my own analysis is Dante, whose *Commedia* certainly contributed to Italian lay confidence in the theological relevance of poetry (Minnis, *Authorship*, pp. 214–16), and who conceived of his own work in prophetic terms. Nonetheless, Dante did not explicitly engage in a 'humanist' defence of poetry, and Mussato undertook

humanist theory. The significance of this stream is a crucial strand of the story this book tells.³⁴

My final two chapters therefore work in tandem to reveal how prophecy was reinterpreted at the beginning of the fourteenth century, particularly in the developing humanist milieu of Avignon and Padua. Chapter Five examines the writings of Nicholas Trevet, the English Dominican whose work was influential both at the new centre of power in papal Avignon and in early Italian humanist circles during the height of turmoil over radical Franciscans. Trevet was suspicious of predictive claims, and he combined this suspicion with an attentiveness to prophetic language and philosophical discernment of the workings of time. His model of prophecy had affinities with literary talent and intellectual ability and was indicative of trends within both the Dominican Order and the Avignon court.

In Chapter Six, I examine the work of Albertino Mussato, who shared many of Trevet's views on the nature and purview of prophetic inspiration. Mussato turned away from a predictive, apocalyptic understanding of prophecy and saw the workings of the Spirit in philosophical poetry, which combined harmonious expression with ethical import. Yet unlike Trevet, Mussato was a layman, and he staked his claim to prophetic status in opposition to much of scholastic and clerical custom. Mussato thus became involved in a polemical exchange with a local Dominican more concerned with articulating limits than with furthering the implications of work such as Trevet's. By insisting that the complicated manner in which multiple strands of the medieval prophetic tradition intertwined.

IV.

Long before this period, the classical and patristic eras had established certain fundamental parameters for understanding prophecy and inspiration. Of great importance was the ambiguous term *vates*, which the classical world left to its medieval inheritors. Roman authors used this word to describe those who prophesied like the sibyls, that is, those who made predictions and who had a priestly role, as mediators between divine

his defence independently of Dante. Dante was a more important figure for succeeding generations of humanists, as part of a larger, 'gradual process' drawing together sacred and secular literature: see *MLTC*, pp. 386–7.

³⁵ e.g. Vergil, *Aeneid*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969) III.358, 712; VI.12.

and human.³⁵ But, as Cicero pointed out, Democritus and Plato had spoken of poets having the same divine inspiration as the prophetic *vates*, an inspiration that often took the form of *furor* or frenzy.³⁶ Other Roman writers accepted this connection between poets and prophets, but not all took on the notion of frenzied inspiration: Horace's *Ars poetica*, in an influential description of a poet (*vates*), insisted instead upon craftsmanship and diligent learning.³⁷ For Horace, the *vates* had a role similar to the classical orator who used wisdom (*sapientia*) to civilize people through eloquence; such wisdom came from contemplation of the divine (*res divinae*) according to Quintilian.³⁸ On the other hand, Macrobius' early fifth-century discussion of veiled language in philosophy and prophetic dreams (*visiones*) left a different legacy: the *vates* used obscure speech for fear the crowds would distort the divine mysteries, or because he had special knowledge of future time.³⁹

Medieval encyclopaedists absorbed these different strands without clear distinctions: Isidore of Seville (d.636), for instance, enshrined the multiple meanings of *vates* in his *Etymologies*, using it in the sections *De poetis*, *De prophetis*, and *De clericis*.⁴⁰ This threefold association—an intersection of inspired vision, structured speech, and sacred power—was a remnant of the ancient world, but when Peter Lombard repeated the connection while discussing the *vates* in his influential twelfth-century *Book of Sentences*, its enduring significance as a source of reflection on those three elements became clear.⁴¹

The writers of the patristic period sought to reconcile the association between priesthood, poetry, and prophecy with the Christian scriptural inheritance, while simultaneously determining the relationship between the Old Testament—with its own prominent prophets—and the life of Christ and his Church. Jerome's scriptural commentaries played an important role in this process, a role I will turn to throughout this book. But I want to highlight here the influence of a patristic concept, one which

³⁶ *De divinatione*, ed. W. A. Falconer (Cambridge, MA, 1923) I.36.80.

³⁷ *Ars poetica*, ed. E. C. Wickham and H. W. Garrod, in *Opera*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1901), ll. 295–309.

³⁸ *Ars poetica*, ll. 391–407; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, ed. M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1970) XII.2.20–21. Horace described the *vates* as 'sacred' in *Odes*, ed. Wickham and Garrod, in *Opera*, IV.9.28.

³⁹ *Commentarius in Somnium Scipionis*, ed. J. Willis (Leipzig, 1970) I.2–3, 7.

⁴⁰ *Etymologiae*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911) VII.8.1, 12.15; VIII.7.3.

⁴¹ For Peter, the meaning of 'vates' is 'multiplex', referring sometimes to priest (*sacerdos*), sometimes to prophet (*propheta*), sometimes to poet (*poeta*): *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, ed. Collegium S. Bonaventurae (Grottaferrata, 1971) IV.d24.18. This particular persistence of 'vates' reveals the wisdom of John Fleming's description of the Latin language as a 'conservative element' in the Middle Ages: 'the cultural implications of its conservatism are nearly immeasurable'. See 'Muses of the Monastery', *Speculum*, 78 (2003), p. 1082.

greatly encouraged the expansion of prophecy beyond the notion of predictive vision. This concept set forth that the best prophet was not the one most susceptible to visions, but rather the one who most deeply understood those visions. Augustine articulated this in a discussion of inspiration, declaring that there are three types of visions: corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual.⁴² ‘Corporeal’ is what the eyes physically see, ‘spiritual’ is a *mental* awareness of images, and ‘intellectual’ is the comprehension and interpretation of what has been seen by either mind or eye. The best prophecy, for Augustine, is based on the third type of vision—on understanding—so that in Genesis, for example, Joseph, who saw no images himself, was a greater prophet than Pharaoh, since Joseph understood and interpreted what Pharaoh’s dreams meant.⁴³

Significantly, Augustine then applied this idea to historical experience. A prophet’s true role, regardless of special vision or mission, was to discern God’s plan in history, to see the hidden meanings and connections of words and events, and to shape them into a coherent narrative of *sacred* history, which for Augustine was the story told in Scripture. Prophecy, therefore, was the writing of sacred history (*sacra historia*), which Augustine also calls ‘prophetic history’ (*prophetica historia*).⁴⁴ ‘Prophetic history’ sounds like an oxymoron, a strange combination of the future and the past, but for Augustine prophecy did not necessarily mean prediction: Moses’ narrative about Creation in Genesis, for instance, was an important prophetic statement about the *past* because it revealed God’s saving work in time. If prophecy, then, was the writing of Scripture, *all* biblical authors were in this sense prophets: through inspiration, they saw the hidden rational plan, or *ratio*, of history, and then created their narratives, or chose the right words, so as to reveal this *ratio*. What they wrote became

⁴² *De Genesi ad litteram*, ed. J. Zycha, CSEL 28/1 (Vienna, 1894) XII.7, p. 388: ‘corporeale’; ‘spiritalē’; ‘intellectuale’. Augustine’s system is summarized for reference in my Appendix.

⁴³ *De Gen. litt.* XII.9. Throughout this book, I recognize the difficulties—and yet the necessity—of translating medieval terms of cognition. I do not intend to equate ‘intellect’ with ‘mind’, since the mind, for Augustine as well as for scholastic thinkers, comprised intellect, will, and memory. On *intellectus* in the Middle Ages, see É. H. Wéber, ‘Intellect’, in *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Vauchez et al., i (Chicago, 2000), p. 729: ‘[*intellectus* is] firstly the content of the operation of knowledge and then the supreme faculty or power of knowledge in man. The meaning of faculty and that of object of intellection are often indissociable’. But see also the warnings of Katherine Tachau, ‘Approaching Medieval Scholars’ Treatment of Cognition’, in M. C. Pacheco and J. F. Meirinhos (eds), *Intellect and Imagination in Medieval Philosophy*, i (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 1–8.

⁴⁴ *De civitate dei*, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, CCSL 47–8 (Turnhout, 1955) XVI.2, p. 501.

⁴⁵ R. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 13–14. Markus notes that Augustine’s distinction between sacred and secular is

sacred history, as opposed to secular history, which has no underlying *ratio*.⁴⁵ Prophets had, in Robert Markus's words, the 'principle of selection',⁴⁶ the ability to choose from the flood of historical experience and create statements pointing to the hidden narrative of salvation, the true expression of divine eloquence (*divina eloquentia*).⁴⁷

Even with prophetic selection, Augustine believed that this scriptural narrative was difficult to comprehend—it consisted of 'obscure secrets' (*opaca secreta*).⁴⁸ Augustine was yet more insistent on the difficulties of reading non-scriptural history: a discernible sacred narrative had ended with Christ. Until the end of time, there would be no more prophets to integrate the confusion of historical events into a total interpretation. In Markus's words, 'There is no sacred history of the last age: there is only a gap for it in the sacred history'.⁴⁹ God's saving work essentially finished with the work of Christ, when the world entered into its Sixth Age, an age which would endure till the Last Judgement.⁵⁰ One should not look for prophets now.

But when other patristic thinkers turned to St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, they found an alternative model to Augustine's, one which focused less on specific epistemological content and the narrative of sacred history and more on ecclesiastical function. This functional emphasis helped to suggest one way in which prophecy might in fact continue. Paul's letter to the Corinthians describes the gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the early Church for its guidance; one of these gifts is prophecy, the revelation of hidden mysteries to others.⁵¹ The prophetic role thus involved teaching the faithful. Faced with both Augustine's and Paul's models, Cassiodorus, in his sixth-century commentary on the Psalms, tied Augustine's notion of intellectual prophecy to the Pauline model of post-Incarnation prophecy. Cassiodorus noted that the purpose of a prophet was to build up the Church by bringing forth hidden and unknown things (*res incognitae*).⁵² This prophetic gift therefore included exegetical capabilities: 'those who have been granted the ability to

not a judgement about certain events being more holy than others, but rather about a particular narrative *interpretation* of events revealing a sacred meaning.

⁴⁶ *Saeculum*, p. 17.

⁴⁷ Cf. Augustine, *Epistulae*, ed. A. Goldbacher, CSEL 34/2 (Vienna, 1898) 102.6.33.

⁴⁸ *Confessiones*, ed. J. J. O'Donnell, i (Oxford, 1992) XI.2.3, p. 149.

⁴⁹ *Saeculum*, p. 23.

⁵⁰ Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus*, ed. I. B. Bauer, CCSL 46 (Turnhout, 1969) XXII, pp. 163–4. The first five ages divide the period from Creation to Christ. Augustine resisted interpreting the Book of Revelation as speaking about events *within* history: *De civ. XVIII.52, XX.7*.

⁵¹ 1 Cor. 12, 14.

⁵² *Expositio Psalmorum*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 97 (Turnhout, 1958), praef.1, p. 9.

understand well and to interpret the divine Scriptures are obviously not excluded from the gift of prophecy'.⁵³ To understand prophetic writing, in other words, one should be prophetically inspired oneself.

Gregory the Great (540–604) made decisive additions to the patristic storehouse of reflections on this theme. Recognizing, as Augustine did, the role that prophetic inspiration had in creating all of Scripture, Gregory stated that prophecy was concerned not with the future alone, but rather with all times—past, present, and future.⁵⁴ Non-predictive prophecy was ultimately aimed at revealing reality ('ostendit quod est'), a reality hidden (*occulta*) from normal sight and brought forth through inspired vision.⁵⁵ Gregory was particularly interested in moral or tropological readings of Scripture, so he emphasized that the narration of what has been done (*res gestae*), the deeds of scriptural history, is also the narration of what *should* be done (*res gerendae*).⁵⁶ History needed an interpreter of its ethical meaning. If, as Cassiodorus showed, prophecy included the interpretation of scriptural texts and their *res gestae*, it was not a great leap for Gregory to claim the prophetic mantle for preachers and for bishops, that is, for those who explicated texts and their *res gerendae* for the guidance and salvation of their flock.⁵⁷ These new prophets spoke about what should be done in the present by looking to the future (the joys of heaven) with foresight, a foresight used for moral guidance.⁵⁸ Preachers could also adopt the admonitory tone (*prophetia comminationis*) seen in prophetic texts like Jeremiah.⁵⁹ The preaching and teaching function of prophecy thus

⁵³ *Expositio Psalmorum*, p. 9: 'facultas bene intelligendi vel interpretandi scripturas divinas, a munere prophetiae non videntur excepti'; trans., P. G. Walsh, *Explanation of the Psalms*, ACW 51 (New York, 1990), p. 28.

⁵⁴ *Homiliae in Hiezechielem prophetam*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 142 (Turnhout, 1971) I.1, p. 5: 'Prophetia tempora tria sunt, scilicet praeteritum, praesens, et futurum'. Gregory's examples were: for the past, Moses writing of Creation; for the present, preaching in the early Church as described by Paul; and for the future, Isaiah's prediction of the virgin birth.

⁵⁵ *In Hiez.* I.1, p. 5.

⁵⁶ *Homiliae in Evangelia*, ed. R. Étaix, CCSL 141 (Turnhout, 1999) II.21.2 p. 174: 'res gesta aliquid... signat gerendum'. Cf. Hilary of Poitiers's fourth-century *Tractatus super Psalmos*, ed. J. Doignon, CCSL 61 (Turnhout, 1997) 62.4, p. 207: 'The knowledge of prophecy is to remember deeds (*gesta*) for the sake of what should be done (*pro gerendis*)'.

⁵⁷ *In Evangelia* II.30.7; and *In I Regum*, ed. P. Verbraken, CCSL 144 (Turnhout, 1963) IV.1.

⁵⁸ *In Hiez.* XI.4.

⁵⁹ Cf. the admonitions throughout Book III of Gregory's *Regula pastoralis*, ed. F. Rommel, SC 381–2 (Paris, 1992).

⁶⁰ Gregory called the episcopacy both the order of preachers (*ordo praedicatorum*) and the order of teachers (*ordo doctorum*): e.g. *In I Regum* III.14–16, 27–30. See also Congar, 'Theologians and the Magisterium in the West: From the Gregorian Reform to the Council

continued in the ongoing pilgrim life of the Church, under the guidance of the episcopacy.⁶⁰

Gregory was not alone among early medieval thinkers in emphasizing the moral relevance of understanding time's movement. His contemporary, Boethius, provided a particularly crucial example in the *Consolation of Philosophy*: if one avoided, as Augustine urged, attempts to write sacred history about the present day, one could still hope to deal with the actual experience of time and to gain insight into the vicissitudes of fortune for oneself. The *Consolation* suggested that one purpose of discerning the workings of time was to find—and offer to others—consolation, a way of bearing up against apparent misfortune in the present by learning how to know one's true end.⁶¹ Predictive prophecy, to be sure, still made appearances in the early Middle Ages, but its focus was usually on political power or particular personal events. More frequently, as with Gregory's preachers, holy men and women used inspired understanding for the purpose of offering moral guidance in the present.⁶²

Gregory's concepts were influential, yet his promotion of bishops as contemporary prophets raised questions which lingered beneath the surface, and which were finally taken up with increasing intensity in the twelfth century. A major reason for this was the structural changes Latin Christianity underwent beginning with the eleventh-century reform movements associated with Pope Gregory VII.⁶³ Reformers sought to separate clergy from the rest of society by sharply delineating priestly functions, and to call ecclesiastical officeholders to a greater apostolic life.⁶⁴ As the Roman Church reformed and formalized its powers, the nature of those powers came under greater scrutiny. An ordained cleric's potency as a channel for the grace of the sacraments was generally accepted. But reformist impulses also promoted an apostolic way of life

of Trent', *Chicago Studies*, 17 (1978), p. 211, who notes that *praedicare* could mean 'the total and absolute proclamation of the faith'. Echoes of Gregory can still be heard in Catholic theologians: 'The prophet is someone who tells the truth on the strength of his contact with God—the truth for today, which also, naturally, sheds light on the future', J. Ratzinger, foreword in Hvidt, *Christian Prophecy*, p. vii.

⁶¹ Cf. *De consolazione philosophiae*, ed. L. Bieler (Turnhout, 1984) I.p6.

⁶² B. McGinn, 'Prophetic Power in Early Medieval Christianity', *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 17 (1996), pp. 261–7.

⁶³ Colin Morris notes that the 'Gregorian Reform' was actually 'a series of overlapping initiatives' that emerged c.1050 'operating at a number of different levels' across Europe: *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (New York, 1989), p. 82.

⁶⁴ Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, pp. 99–100; G. Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century*, trans. T. Reuter (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 157–84, 320.

⁶⁵ St Norbert of Xanten is but one example of a twelfth-century adherent to this *vita apostolica*. See H. Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. S. Rowan

through voluntary poverty and a renewed commitment to preaching, because priestly ordination alone was considered insufficiently evangelical.⁶⁵

These issues highlighted tensions between prophetic content or experience and prophetic social function. The language of 'prophecy' was used for both, each mutually reinforcing the other, so that trying to distinguish between them was difficult. Gregory's model therefore faced questions: were the Church's prophetic functions of teaching and moral guidance based on virtue, wisdom, and holiness, or were they based on sacramental ordination? Was prophecy part of the institution's structures, or was it due to some special inspired experience? How, furthermore, was prophetic authority to be reconciled with the recognition that God could make anyone a prophet for good purposes, even the wicked?⁶⁶ Words seemed to have power, even if their speaker did not practise what he preached. At the beginning of the twelfth century, these questions remained fundamentally unresolved. Grappling with the relationship of institutional office, personal prophetic insight, and sacred authority was a task which occupied two centuries, and which it will be the work of the following chapters to explore.

(Notre Dame, IN, 1995), pp. 7–8, 220–2; and G. Constable, 'Renewal and Reform in Religious Life: Concepts and Realities', in *RRTC*, pp. 53–6.

⁶⁶ Gregory had acknowledged evil prophets, while nonetheless asserting that compunction of the heart prepared the way for the prophetic spirit to enter: *In Hiez.* I.15; *Moralia in Job*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 143–143b (Turnhout, 1979–85) XXVII.1.2. Caiaphas and Balaam became traditional examples of wicked prophets, cited in numerous early medieval sources: M. Schlosser, *Lucerna in caliginoso loco: Aspekte des Prophetie-Begriffes in der scholastischen Theologie* (Paderborn, 2000), pp. 179ff.

Hugh of St Victor and the Prophetic Contemplation of History

A story about the importance of prophetic inspiration in the Middle Ages must take account of the close relationship between prophecy and time. As a source of knowledge about future events or the patterns of history, prophecy was the ‘chief inspiration of all historical thinking’ in the period.¹ In the twelfth century, both topics—prophecy, history, and the relationship between them—became the subjects of reflection and reassessment. One of the most important figures involved in the growth of medieval historical consciousness is Hugh of St Victor (d.1141), a canon regular at the abbey of St Victor in Paris. During Hugh’s time, the school at St Victor combined the ordered life of religious community with teaching open to the public, and Hugh became a seminal figure among the masters of Paris.²

Hugh’s sensitivity to history is evident throughout his works. He strongly emphasizes the historical sense of Scripture in works such as his pedagogical treatise *Didascalicon*, while his *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith* (*De sacramentis christianae fidei*) organizes theology not along doctrinal lines, as typical scholastic *summae* eventually would, but along chronological ones.³ If historical consciousness does indeed draw upon an interest in prophecy, then this link ought to be visible in Hugh’s abiding concern with time and history. Almost nowhere, however, in academic discussions of Hugh’s work is there reference to what was, in fact, a crucial facet of Hugh’s thought.⁴ Instead, another twelfth-century

¹ R. W. Southern, ‘Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 3. History as Prophecy’, *TRHS*, 5th ser., 22 (1972), p. 160.

² Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe*, ii (Oxford, 2001), pp. 56–9; and S. Ferruolo, *The Origins of the University* (Stanford, CA, 1985), pp. 29–30.

³ B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1982), pp. 89–90; Southern, ‘Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 2. Hugh of St Victor and the Idea of Historical Development’, *TRHS*, 5th ser., 21 (1971), p. 164.

⁴ In addition to Dominique Poirel’s *Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Paris, 1998), there has been a flurry of monographs on Hugh in recent years: P. Rorem, *Hugh of Saint Victor* (Oxford, 2009); F. Harkins, *Reading and the Work of Restoration: History and Scripture in the Theology of Hugh of St Victor* (Toronto, 2009); and B. T. Coolman, *The Theology of Hugh of Saint*

abbot, Joachim of Fiore (c.1130s–1202), has largely determined how scholars think about history and prophecy in that century. Other contemporary figures certainly reflected on prophecy and inspiration, for the twelfth century was preoccupied with discerning the precise role of the Holy Spirit in history and individual lives.⁵ Discussions of them in both this chapter and the next will fill out a picture of the twelfth century. But Hugh is the primary focus of this chapter because, as an influence both on the monastic and scholastic traditions, he laid important foundations for prophecy's place in both contemplative and systematic theology, and he highlights inspiration's role in historical insight in ways that Joachim's future-oriented discourse does not. Hugh ultimately argues that understanding history is a form of prophecy.

Historical consciousness was important to Hugh because it was a crucial part of the process of spiritual restoration which he, like many others in the twelfth century, believed could to a high degree be accomplished.⁶ This optimism, according to M.-D. Chenu, derived in large part from a reconsideration of time and history, which depended, in turn, on a reformulation of the connection between nature and human beings—a perception of 'the effective ties between the life of society and the rhythms of nature'.⁷ Hugh explicitly links history and nature, suggesting that people—a part of nature—are themselves microcosms of the patterns of time's unfolding. If self-knowledge is necessary to achieve union with God, then historical awareness becomes part of the very process of individual salvation, and a proper understanding of, and relationship to time, is crucial for spiritual renewal. For Hugh, this ultimately means that each individual must become a present-day prophet.

The chief obstacle to this task, for Hugh, is time's own instability, the *mutabilitas rerum*. If, as Franklin Harkins argues, 'history provides [for Hugh] the order according to which the human mind is to be re-ordered',⁸ then serious account must be taken of the difficulties and dangers for someone focused on temporal things and events. Some of Hugh's most

Victor (Cambridge, 2010). Two articles which do point to the role of prophecy in Hugh's work are Southern's 'Hugh of St Victor', and Barbara Obrist's 'Image et prophétie au 12e siècle: Hugues de Saint-Victor et Joachim de Flore', *MEFRMA*, 98 (1986), pp. 37–63.

⁵ R. F. Brown, 'Three-in-One: Making God in Twelfth-Century Liturgy, Theology, and Devotion' in T. F. X. Noble and J. Van Engen (eds), *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century* (Notre Dame, IN, 2012), pp. 468–98, including p. 472, where she highlights the Trinitarian focus of the first canon of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) as a summary of twelfth-century theological concerns.

⁶ On twelfth-century attitudes towards restoration, see G. Constable, 'Renewal and Reform in Religious Life: Concepts and Realities', in *RRTC*, pp. 37–67.

⁷ *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century*, trans. J. Taylor and L. K. Little (Toronto, 1997), p. 162.

⁸ *Reading*, p. 64.

penetrating considerations of this danger occur not in major works such as *Didascalicon* or *De sacramentis* but in two compositions rarely discussed by scholars, *De vanitate mundi* and his commentary on Ecclesiastes, *Homiliae in Salomonis Ecclesiasten*.⁹

The mutability of things was, of course, a common medieval theme. Augustine's meditations on time and history led him to see his own age—the Sixth Age of the world—as a succession of events which offered little discernible meaning, even though they were guided by providence.¹⁰ Macrobius and Boethius also made mutability part of their reflections on contempt for the world (*contemptus mundi*): Macrobius contrasted passing temporal glory with everlasting heavenly things, while Boethius emphasized the providential purpose of fortune's vicissitudes, which underlined the need for detachment from a transient world.¹¹ But Hugh's reflections on time and mutability in *De vanitate* and *In Ecclesiasten* lead him to a different emphasis, one that indicates a reassessment both of Boethian detachment and of Augustinian scepticism about history. Hugh reworks his predecessors' ideas by turning *mutabilitas* into a meaningful, redemptive process, while retaining a contempt for the world's insignificance. *De vanitate* and *In Ecclesiasten* reveal particularly well how Hugh's confrontation with the dangers of mutability underlies his conception of the prophetic model, a model which blurs the line between revelation and the contemplation of history.

I. HUGH'S *HOMILIES ON ECCLESIASTES* AND THE WORK OF CREATION

In the *Didascalicon*, Hugh proposes that young students start their education with the study of history,¹² but for those undertaking a more

⁹ Of the three most recent monographs on Hugh's thought (p. 18 n. 4), none mention *In Ecclesiasten* except in passing, although it is discussed in I. van 't Spijker, *Fictions of the Inner Life: Religious Literature and Formation of the Self in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Turnhout, 2004) pp. 115–27. Rorem (*Hugh*, pp. 151–4) and Coolman (*Theology of Hugh*, pp. 186–7) devote only a few pages to *De vanitate*, but it is examined by C. Giraud, 'Du silence à la parole: Le latin spirituel d'Hugues de Saint-Victor dans le *De vanitate mundi*', *AHDLM*, 77 (2010), pp. 7–27. For a fuller discussion of these two texts, see also my 'Time, History, and Mutability in Hugh of St Victor's *Homilies on Ecclesiastes* and *De vanitate mundi*', *Viator*, 43 (2012), pp. 215–40.

¹⁰ See the Introduction, pp. 12–14.

¹¹ Macrobius' *In Somnium* and Boethius' *De consolazione* were often placed together in twelfth-century manuscripts: M. T. Gibson, 'Codices Boethiani', *Revue d'histoire des textes*, 14–15 (1984–5), p. 73.

¹² For an example of Hugh's own 'schoolbook of history' designed for this purpose, see his *Chronicon*, ed. W. Green, 'Hugo of St Victor: *De tribus maximis circumstantiis gestorum*', *Speculum*, 18 (1943) pp. 484–93.

mature contemplative journey he clearly believes that any further meditation on history should be preceded by meditation on time itself. Hugh's *In Ecclesiasten* attempts to lay this contemplative groundwork. Perhaps Hugh's last work (composed c.1140),¹³ this collection of homilies is unfinished, but for Hugh's purposes it treats the most important passages of Ecclesiastes, namely the discussion of vanity and the arrangement of a time for everything.¹⁴ Beryl Smalley was struck by *In Ecclesiasten* primarily because of Hugh's literal exegesis of the text, noting that the homilies 'became a classic', but her interest lay more in Hugh's exegetical method than in his ideas.¹⁵ In fact, this work forms a crucial part of Hugh's larger narrative about the salvific role of history. Comparatively few medieval exegetes attempted a commentary on Ecclesiastes,¹⁶ but, for Hugh, the work's apparent pessimism about the possibility of finding meaning or structure in the passage of time had to be explained if history were to remain a path to self-understanding. Hugh, therefore, sought to find in the book a distinction between things that lasted and things that did not.

In the process, Hugh's exegesis reveals a good deal about his transformation of the concept of prophecy. The works of Solomon, who was considered the author of Ecclesiastes, were not counted among the Prophetic books of Scripture in traditional classifications, the most influential of which was Jerome's prologue to the Book of Kings, the so-called 'Helmeted Prologue' (*Prologus galeatus*), in which Jerome sought to protect Christians from non-canonical scriptural texts.¹⁷ Jerome followed the Jewish tripartite division of Scripture into Law, Prophets, and what he called *hagiographa* (sacred writings), which included Job, the works of Solomon, and the Psalms of David. Jerome's divisions were not the only possibilities: Augustine, for instance, listed the Psalms and Solomonite texts within Prophecy, while Cassiodorus gave both the Psalms and the works of Solomon their own sections.¹⁸ But the *Glossa ordinaria*, the twelfth-century compilation of glosses which eventually became the

¹³ D. van den Eynde, *Essai sur la succession et la date des écrits de Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Rome, 1960), pp. 72–5; Poirrel, *Hugues*, p. 39.

¹⁴ The work, in PL 175.113–256, goes up to Ecclesiastes 4:8. The manuscript tradition is not clear on the precise nature of Hugh's work; some manuscripts refer to it as a 'Tractatus' (e.g. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 345, fol. 1r). Nonetheless, these homilies may have been preached in some form to his fellow canons.

¹⁵ *Medieval Exegesis of Wisdom Literature*, ed. R. Murphy (Atlanta, GA, 1986), p. 3.

¹⁶ For a survey of medieval Ecclesiastes exegesis, see E. Christianson, *Ecclesiastes through the Centuries* (Oxford, 2007) pp. 23–40.

¹⁷ *Prologus in Libro Regum*, in R. Weber (ed.), *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgata versionem*, 4th edn (Stuttgart, 1994), pp. 364–6.

¹⁸ Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, ed. and trans. R. P. H. Green (Oxford, 1995) II.8.13; Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1937) I.4.2; I.5.

standard reference work for all exegetes, used Jerome's schema.¹⁹ Hugh did not use the *Glossa*, but he did follow Jerome's Old Testament divisions: his 'hagiographers' include Job, David, Solomon, Ezra, and Esther.²⁰

Jerome's categories prompted a common twelfth-century exegetical question: why did some prophetic texts seem to be among the Hagiographic books, while some historical writings seemed to be among the official Prophetic ones? Hugh himself asks this question in his *Sententiae de divinitate*, and his answer relies on the common medieval premise that the entire Old Testament prefigures the New, making every author in some way a prophet.²¹ There are three types of prophets, he says, those by office (e.g. Isaiah), by mission (e.g. Jonah), and by grace (hagiographers). This final group offered a form of prophecy which did not consist in grand visions or warnings to the people, but was due instead to the grace of the Holy Spirit filling their writings.²² Hugh adds elsewhere that the members of this group even have a certain humble unworthiness in relation to other prophets.²³ The *Glossa's* definition of this scriptural Hagiography likewise places it in an unusual position, both sacred and at the same time without any clear limitations: *hagiographa* consists of writings about the lives of 'holy people'.²⁴

This ambiguous, modest prophetic standing of hagiographers is the key to Hugh's approach to prophetic inspiration. Indeed, Hugh provides no explicit statements about the nature of prophecy, and he has left very few commentaries on the Prophetic books of Scripture.²⁵ Instead, Hugh offers

¹⁹ For a history of the *Glossa*, see L. Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria* (Leiden, 2009). Smith rightly cautions against positing a uniform text of the *Glossa* (pp. 12ff.); when I cite the *Glossa*, I generally do so to confirm widespread exegetical assumptions found also in other works.

²⁰ *Didascalicon*, ed. T. Offergeld (Freiburg, 1997) IV.2. On the *Glossa's* use at St Victor, see Smith, *Glossa*, pp. 151–3.

²¹ *Sententiae de divinitate*, ed. A. Piazzoni, in 'Ugo di San Vittore, "auctor" delle "Sententiae de divinitate"', *Studi medievali*, 3rd ser., 23 (1982), p. 916: 'oritur questio quare inter hagiographos quidam de prophetis sint numerati, ut Iob et David et Daniel, et inter prophetas quidam de historiographis qui tantum res gestas referebant sine predictione futurorum ut liber Iosue et iudicum et regum'.

²² *De divinitate*, p. 916.

²³ *De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris praenotatiunculae*, PL 175.20: 'quasi ex quadam indignitate respectu aliorum'.

²⁴ See, for instance, the early printed version in *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria*, ed. K. Froehlich and M. T. Gibson, ii (Turnhout, 1992), Kings Prologue, pp. 1–2: 'Agiographa, id est, sacra scripta, id est de sanctorum vita, ut tobias et iob'.

²⁵ Only Hugh's commentary on Lamentations, *In Threnos Ieremiae*, has been generally accepted as an authentic work on the Prophets: Poirel, *Hugues*, pp. 39–40. Recent scholarship has challenged the attributions of his commentaries on Joel, Obadiah, and Nahum: R. Moore 'Hugh of St Victor and the Authorship of *In Threnos Ieremiae*', *Journal of Religious History*, 22 (1998), pp. 255–69. Smalley, unfortunately, discusses Hugh's approach to prophecy by relying on his glosses on Joel (*Study of the Bible*, p. 101), which

the method and insights of the wise hagiographer Solomon for use by his audience in their own meditations on time and history. Solomon, in short, is effectively presented as a model for the cultivation of contemporary prophetic vision.

The subject Hugh confronts in his first homily is the famous phrase of Ecclesiastes' opening chapter: 'vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas'. Solomon, says Hugh, has looked upon the things of the world and seen that they all pass, and therefore he utters this dictum as a warning. Mutability (*mutabilitas*) is a form of vanity or emptiness.²⁶ We become what we love, and thus mutability in the things we desire infects us: 'because [man] began to rest in mutable things through his mind's desire, ... he could not be stable'.²⁷ But if the transience of time-bound Creation is a grave temptation for people, it is also the field in which to overcome that temptation. If temporal words and actions become rooted in an underlying divine truth, they do not pass away like everything else. Anyone who works with the proper devotion to God does not work under time: the fruit of such a labourer's actions transcends his own temporal works.²⁸

Hugh finds his justification for this distinction by looking to Creation, to the very ground of mutability. He says that the earth is stable—meaning not that it is eternal, but rather that it preserves its own nature ('servat naturam suam') and does not go beyond the boundaries of that nature.²⁹ Hugh believes this is a good principle for people as well, who are made of the material of nature, and not just bodily—they have a *natura* that is a microcosm of the universe's *natura*. Therefore, imitate the earth, he urges: 'imiteris materiam tuam'.³⁰ What nature does outwardly should be the model for what people must do inwardly.

The more that someone recognizes the vanity of the temporal, the more his inner eye (*oculus mentis*) becomes open to eternity.³¹ This is the beginning of the prophetic awakening, yet Solomon turns to the temporal

have now been attributed to Richard of St Victor. Moore even questions Hugh's authorship of Lamentations and the Pentateuch *Notulae*, which would leave the homilies on Ecclesiastes as Hugh's only Old Testament commentary, but Poirrel resists going this far.

²⁶ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 119. Two other vanities are curiosity and mortality.

²⁷ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 120: 'quia per desiderium mentis mutabilibus inniti coepit, ... stabilis esse non potuit'.

²⁸ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 129.

²⁹ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 132.

³⁰ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 132. Cf. Chenu's claim that twelfth-century thinkers began conceiving of themselves as part of nature, as 'bits of this cosmos': *Nature*, p. 5. Hugh provides three definitions of *natura* in *Didascalicon* I.10, pp. 142–4; trans., J. Taylor (New York, 1961, repr. 1991), p. 57: 1) God's plan or *ratio* for time and Creation; 2) one's own 'peculiar being' (*proprium esse*); and 3) a physical force or 'power to beget sensible objects'.

³¹ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 134. Jerome wrote that prophets saw, not with the *oculus carnis*, but with the *oculus mentis*: *Commentariorum in Esaiam*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 73 (Turnhout, 1963) III.6.1.

processes of nature in order to accomplish it. The sun and wind and rivers all run their courses, around and around, in constant change, and yet the very constancy of that change is an indication of something deeper, the wondrous law (*lex mirabilis*) that governs them and brings forth from their constant motions all that lives. The vicissitudes of time (*vicissitudines temporum*), such as the alternation of day and night, have a similar pattern. Hugh examines these processes in detail, and he pauses to defend himself from accusations that he is abandoning exegesis as he does so. In fact, the contrary is true: reading nature *is* exegesis. All Creation proclaims the great law of mutability: everything is in motion, and that constant motion is the source of the creature's existence.³² Delight in, and admiration of, the temporal processes of Creation are the proper responses to discerning this law. Proper contemplation of these endless circlings leads to proper love of them, for then one realizes what they are: 'defect without defect', impermanent matter with a designed order (*ratio artificis*).³³ This is the salvific paradox in the temporal processes of nature: contempt of the world's corruptible matter (*contemptus mundi*) at the same time leads the contemplative mind to marvel at the consistent patterns of change.³⁴

Like a sacrament, the natural vicissitudes of time signify God's *ratio*, but they also efficaciously heal, both physically and spiritually.³⁵ The key element in this healing process is harmonious beauty. God has arranged things so that through the fluctuations of time 'weariness of things is removed from human minds by variety, and the beauty of the whole is increased'.³⁶ Hugh's claim here is a psychological and pedagogical one:

³² In *Ecclesiasten*, cols 134–5. Cf. Hugh's *De tribus diebus*: 'For the whole sensible world (*mundus sensibilis*) is like a certain book written by the finger of God . . . and each creature like certain figures (*figurae*), not invented by human pleasure, but instituted by divine will for revealing and . . . signifying (*ad significandum*) the invisible wisdom of God', ed. D. Poirel, CCCM 177 (Turnhout, 2002) IV, p. 9; trans. H. Feiss, in B. T. Coolman and D. Coulter (eds), *Trinity and Creation*, Victorine Texts in Translation 1 (Turnhout, 2010), p. 63.

³³ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 139: 'defectus sine defectu'. Cf. Boethius' claim that the only stability (*constantia*) in Fortune is her instability (*mutabilitas*): *De consolazione* II.p1. Hugh has adapted this paradox for time itself. Cf. also Augustine's notion that created things declare by their mutability that they are created, 'for they suffer change and variation' ('mutantur enim atque variantur'): *Confessiones* XI.4, i, p. 150; trans. H. Chadwick (Oxford, 1992), p. 224.

³⁴ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 139: 'succumbit mens admiratione in contemplatione rationis'.

³⁵ Hugh defines a sacrament as a 'corporeal or material element set before the senses without, representing by similitude and signifying by institution and containing by sanctification some invisible and spiritual grace': *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, PL 176.318, l.9.2; trans. R. J. Deferrari (Cambridge, MA, 1951), p. 155. Hugh played an influential role in the theological process of defining sacraments: Harkins, *Reading*, p. 222.

³⁶ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 119: 'fastidium rerum varietate mentibus humanis tollitur et decor . . . universitatis augetur'.

God recognizes that people both need and learn from variation and change. Furthermore, contemplation of God's rational ordering (*ratio*) of corruptible matter is pleasurable: 'sweetly it is refreshed through its own defect'.³⁷ Corruption, paradoxically, becomes beautiful and delightful both to the bodily senses and to the rational soul.

This understanding of, and response to, the created world leads people to a similar recognition about themselves—there must be a transcendent pattern beautifully ordering their own mutability. In Hugh's commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchy*, he stresses the beauty of diversity (*variatio*), a divine beauty that has emanated from its source.³⁸ In *Ecclesiasten* insists that people must return to God via that very multiplicity, and they can do so when they recognize the similarity between visible and invisible beauty, the sacramental symbolism of Creation. The impetus to leave the world relies on a positive valuation of it.³⁹

The cycles of nature do not, however, mean that the life of humanity also moves in a circle. Instead, Hugh insists that Solomon's claim that there is nothing new under the sun (Eccles. 1:9–10) implies that nature has an original disposition or *ratio* which works its way out through time. In other words, history, like nature, is infused with a *ratio* revealed precisely through the transience of its events. The continual passing of time points toward something that gathers up all time. Just as Augustine concluded that a continually disappearing present moment must actually exist eternally with God, so do Solomon's insights into transience point to the *ratio* itself, where past, present, and future are gathered into the eternal.⁴⁰ Both natural processes and temporal events bear witness to the one disposition of God.

A person who does not hold fast to this *ratio* by contemplation will soon be overcome by the flux of the world. This is a consequence of the wrong sort of imitation of nature. One can imitate nature superficially: a foolish man's mind will be distracted, 'thrown outward beyond itself, . . . scattered in a multiplicity of visible things'.⁴¹ This causes not only forgetfulness of the Creator of that *ratio* but also forgetfulness of oneself as a bearer of the

³⁷ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 140: 'suaviter ex defectu suo reficitur'. On the overlapping meanings of 'refresh' (*reficere*), 'restore' (*restaurare*), and 'renew' (*renovare*), in the twelfth century, see G. Ladner, 'Terms and Ideas of Renewal', in *RRTC*, pp. 1–33; and Constable, 'Renewal'.

³⁸ *Commentariorum in Hierarchiam Coelestem*, PL 175.943.

³⁹ Spijker, *Fictions*, p. 125.

⁴⁰ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 146: 'omnia praeterita et futura praesentia sunt'. Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI.13, i, p. 154; trans., p. 230: 'All your "years" subsist in simultaneity (*simul*) . . . your Today is eternity (*aeternitas*)'.

⁴¹ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 156: 'proiecta foras extra semetipsam in multiplicitatem rerum visibilibus spargitur'.

ratio.⁴² In *Ecclesiasten* here sets out to explain how to contemplate without distraction not only the physical cosmos, but also the passage of time itself.

Crucially, Hugh needs to articulate a basis for believing that history is sacramentally symbolic in the same way nature is, so he turns to Solomon's claim that each thing has its proper time.⁴³ Just as everything has a disposition within the cycles of nature, so too everything has a determined place to which it is bound within the passage of time from future to past. A prudent (*prudens*) mind, therefore, recognizes this and makes itself suitable for an existence within temporal circumstances, refusing to place its trust in things that will pass.⁴⁴ The wisest person (*prudētissimus*) must know the proper times for things and must use things while they are present, without becoming dragged down by attachment to the enjoyment of them.⁴⁵

Things used according to their time (*suo tempore*) are good because their underlying *ratio* has been respected, even if certain things do not appear good in themselves: there is a time for breaking down, and a time for building up; a time for weeping and a time for laughing.⁴⁶ All of these activities have their appropriate times for the prudent person. What Hugh is doing, therefore, is removing the negative implications of mutability—despite their temporality, all things are good in their time.

People have the choice to follow the pattern of time or not, and so the task of spiritual education is to attune the soul to that pattern. Misuse of things springs from a disordered view of time and creates further disorder within the soul—this was Augustine's experience of time as a distension of the soul (*distentio animi*), stretched through time in internal distraction.⁴⁷ This is also how Hugh explains the source of the Fall: it was not simply that Adam and Eve transgressed the boundaries established by God, but rather that they took the good that was due them *before* the proper time

⁴² In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 152. The scattered self was a pressing concern for Hugh. In his *Chronicon* (p. 490), distraction causes failure even at the most fundamental level of education, when memory does not retain what has been learned: the heart's imagination (*imaginatio*) is scattered outwardly (*exterior*) among so many different objects that nothing remains within (*intrinsecus*).

⁴³ Eccles. 3:1ff.

⁴⁴ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 206: 'temporibus et temporalibus aptare'.

⁴⁵ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 206. Cf. Augustine's notion that all things exist either for use (*uti*) or enjoyment (*frui*): *De doct.* I.3.

⁴⁶ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 206.

⁴⁷ *Confessiones* XI.23, i, p. 159; and O'Donnell's commentary in *Confessiones*, iii, pp. 289–90. Augustine used the word 'animus' to mean both 'soul' and 'mind, the highest part of the soul' without careful distinction: C. Mayer (ed.), *Augustinus-Lexikon*, i (Basel, 1986), s.v. 'Anima, animus'. Throughout this book, I translate 'animus' as 'soul', 'mind', or 'spirit' depending on the context.

(*ante tempus*).⁴⁸ The measure or boundary of humanity is inherently connected to the passage of time. To avoid repeating such a mistake, it is crucial to find a point from which to look upon the passing of time, to look upon mutability and not be swept away by it. People cannot escape from time; they are bound to experience it and work through it. But, Hugh insists, to bear the flux of time, they must stand upon its inner *ratio*: 'they find eternity . . . who, in the flux of alternating times, remain immutable, fixed with their minds in the desire of eternity'.⁴⁹ To know the proper times for everything is to internalize, not time's transient elements, but the eternal elements unfolding within the temporal.

Hugh's homilies on Ecclesiastes 3 thus take the *ratio* of nature and time and prepare it to be fitted to history. Ecclesiastes' catalogue of times ('a time to live, a time to die', etc.) is for Hugh an admonition to know those times. It is, in essence, an admonition to study history. This equation of the reading of history with the reading of nature would eventually cause problems for schoolmen in the next century, who would challenge the identification of human deeds with the *ratio* of created things.⁵⁰ For Hugh, however, this is a necessary link. The Book of Ecclesiastes itself does not provide Hugh with material for this study of history, but he points to that endeavour as the next step. He briefly urges a wide perusal of human actions over time ('percurramus animo tempora praeterita'), an act that initially reveals history to be a meaningless series of events—wars, royal successions, etc.—from the beginning all the way to the present day.⁵¹ And yet, God's justice, Hugh claims, has been there throughout. Any disputes about God's role in history can be resolved only with a proper perspective on that history, which takes account of the whole pattern from beginning to end, and which reveals how God has used time to work for man's restoration.

Here, Hugh's understanding of the relationship between contemplation, history, and prophecy comes into view. Contemplation is not, of course, immediately identifiable with prophecy. Hugh's contemporary, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), explicitly distinguished contemplative experience from the visions and dreams traditionally associated with prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah:

⁴⁸ *De sacramentis* I.7.15, col. 293; trans., pp. 127–8: God established a proper boundary or measure (*mensura*) so that '[man] should give heed lest he hasten to snatch [the good] up before the time, since he was not to receive it before he had completed his obedience'.

⁴⁹ *In Ecclesiasten*, col. 207: 'illi . . . aeternitatem inveniunt, qui in fluxu temporum alternantium mente in desiderio aeternitatis defixi, immutabiles consistunt'. Compare Augustine's view of memory, which withstands the transience of the present by retaining and ordering past experiences, bringing them forth for contemplation so as to discern divine order: *Confessiones* X.8, 11.

⁵⁰ I discuss this further in Ch. 4.

⁵¹ *In Ecclesiasten*, col. 220.

[One] kind of vision . . . in former times, . . . though not apparent to everyone, took place exteriorly and consisted of images or the spoken word. But there is another form of divine contemplation, very different from the former because it takes place interiorly, when God himself is pleased to visit the soul'.⁵²

This contemplation was 'a marvellous and indistinguishable mingling of the divine light with the enlightened mind', and therefore, he says, 'I avoid trucking with visions and dreams'.⁵³ Yet, as we have seen, the sort of vision Bernard rejects (of words or images) was associated with prophets by office or by mission.⁵⁴ Prophets by grace (hagiographers), on the other hand, experienced inner vision precisely like Bernard's description of contemplation.⁵⁵ The connection between hagiographers and inner vision is what Hugh likewise draws upon.⁵⁶

There are two types of contemplation for Hugh, that of creatures and that of Creator; Ecclesiastes is an example of Solomon's experience of the first, which Hugh also calls *speculatio*, while the Song of Songs shows Solomon's experience of the second, *contemplatio* proper.⁵⁷ Ecclesiastes is thus a contemplation of the work of Creation (*opus conditionis*) and the *ratio* of nature, suggesting how God might then use that work for restoration. But before ascending to direct contemplation of the Creator, Hugh believes something more is needed to complement Solomon's triptych: the full revelation of God's Word in the narrative of restoration (*opus restorationis*). This is the foundation of a more complete *speculatio*. Hugh insists that the contemplative needs to see the *ratio* of history. This instruction is what *De vanitate mundi* provides.⁵⁸

⁵² *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum*, 31.4, SBO 1.221; trans. K. Walsh, ii (Kalamazoo, MI, 1971–80), p. 127: 'quondam . . . haec demonstratio, non quidem communis, sed tamen foris facta est, nimirum exhibita per imagines extrinsecus apparentes seu voces sonantes. Sed est divina inspectio eo differentior ab his, quo interior, cum per seipsum dignatur invisere Deus animam'.

⁵³ *Super Cantica*, 2.2, SBO 1.9; trans., i, p. 9: 'visiones et somnia non recipio'.

⁵⁴ See p. 22.

⁵⁵ Augustine provided a basis for this by linking the supreme 'intellectual' vision with contemplation, a vision people pursue through asceticism and virtue: *De Gen. litt.* XII.26.

⁵⁶ In *De sacramentis* I.10.2, Hugh describes the three eyes of the post-lapsarian soul: the eye of flesh, which works well; the eye of reason, which needs partial restoration; and the eye of contemplation, which is blind. Harkins suggests that this model derives from Augustine's three categories of vision, with Hugh turning the *visio intellectualis* into the *oculus contemplationis*: *Reading*, p. 110. This notion seems correct and supports my own conclusions that Hugh's contemplation is modelled on prophetic vision (a term which Harkins does not use).

⁵⁷ In *Ecclesiasten*, col. 118. Hugh considered the ethical *meditatio* of Proverbs to be Solomon's first step.

⁵⁸ Coolman argues that, for Hugh, post-lapsarian Creation cannot be a direct source of knowledge of God, and that Scripture is required to assist in the reading of the world: 'Pulchrum esse: The Beauty of Scripture, the Beauty of the Soul, and the Art of Exegesis in

II. THE WORK OF RESTORATION IN *DE VANITATE MUNDI*

De vanitate actually predates the *Homilies on Ecclesiastes*,⁵⁹ and its first half anticipates much of what the *Homilies* would later probe more deeply. *De vanitate*'s second half shows how to take the next contemplative step. The book takes the form of a dialogue between Reason and Soul, and it begins by encouraging Soul to realize, as Solomon did, that all is vanity.⁶⁰ Soul, initially enamoured of the world, marvels at the beauty of the work of God. But Reason points out that the world reveals not just the appearance of divine work, but also the mutability of human affairs.⁶¹ To purge Soul of any attachment to such affairs, Reason creates some set-pieces to dramatize what mutability really means: scenes of pleasure-boaters on a tranquil sea, travelers carrying jewels and spices, and newlyweds. Soul admires the beauty and happiness of each group, until in every case the storm of misfortune breaks and all is lost: drowning, robbery, discord. Soul then passes judgement both on what she has witnessed and on her own misplaced trust in all that has disappeared: 'Vanitas est, et vanitas vanitatum'.⁶²

This sequence—loss of self-knowledge leading to confusion and misery—is an old one, but Hugh's method of restoring that self-knowledge offers a new emphasis. Boethius had told the usual story well in *The Consolation of Philosophy*, proposing disengagement from the effects of Fortune as the solution to this misery. But *De vanitate* suggests that it is not detachment from time, but rather a reading of, and immersion in, history that brings an individual to God. In the process, Hugh revises the idea of prophecy, in essence confirming, as he began to with Solomon, that prophetic vision can be imitated, indeed cultivated, through the contemplation of history.

Hugh of St Victor', *Traditio*, 58 (2003), pp. 177, 182. In this sense, scriptural history is a necessary supplement and guide to the insights of Ecclesiastes. As I have shown, however, Hugh also sees the contemplation of time and nature as an important *precondition* for a deeper contemplation of history. Thus, history is not simply a pedagogical foundation for students, as it is in the *Didascalicon* or *Chronicon*, but also material that should be *returned* to once the difficulties of relying on it have been understood.

⁵⁹ Eynde suggests a date between 1125 and 1131: *Essai*, p. 215 (table).

⁶⁰ In the PL, the interlocutors in the first half of the work are labelled 'Docens' and 'Interrogans', while in the second half, the teacher becomes 'Ratio' and the questioner 'Anima'. This is a conflation of two different manuscript traditions, and I adopt the *Ratio/Anima* labels throughout. See W. Cahn, 'An Illuminated Manuscript of Writings by Hugh of St Victor', in E. A. Matter and L. Smith (eds), *From Knowledge to Beatitude*, (Notre Dame, IN, 2013), pp. 56–8.

⁶¹ *De vanitate mundi*, PL 176.705: 'mutabilitas humanae . . . conversionis'.

⁶² *De vanitate*, col. 706.

The interlocutor Soul has seen the vanity of the world, but she must find something solid to cling to, and so Reason urges, as Solomon did, a proper understanding of time as the basis for proper love. The demonstrated vanity of the world has shown that nothing is permanent in the cyclical flux of time: 'nothing abides, they all pass, and return to the place whence they arose'.⁶³ Reason then proposes the remedy: one must lift one's eyes from the passing moments in order to find the larger perspective. Hugh's goal at the end of his *Homilies* is Reason's goal here: to point to the whole sequence (*cursus*) of time, because a confused mind is unable to see the future or remember the past.⁶⁴ This confused mind concerns itself only with the passing present and therefore is continually drawn towards any new thing—it does not have Solomon's perspective. Hugh here implies that this lack of awareness of providence, this lack of spiritual foresight, is actually a lack of prudence: the confused person is not wise (*imprudens*) and has no caution in the present nor awareness of the future (*providentia futurorum*).⁶⁵ Hugh links prudence to a recognition of providence in a manner strongly reminiscent of the definition of prudence offered by Macrobius in the fifth century: prudence is 'to despise the world and all that is in the world in contemplation of what is divine, and to direct all the attention of the soul to divine things alone'.⁶⁶ To love the passing present is to love the world wrongly, imprudently.

As with Boethius' argument, however, Hugh applies Macrobius' *contemptus mundi* in his own way, using time itself to prudently turn away from the transient. As Soul begins to lift her eyes, her view of and desire for the future provokes a surprising reaction. She proclaims her love for mutability, since that increases her desire for the goal to which all things are heading: 'I love what passes, since from that change... I burn the more to pass on hence myself'.⁶⁷ This is what Hugh promoted in his *Homilies*—people must understand their end—but there the emphasis was on understanding how God works in time. Here Hugh stresses humanity's own unavoidable place in the narrative which is moving towards its end within the proper framework of providential history.

⁶³ *De vanitate*, col. 711: 'nihil permanens est, sed transeunt universa, et revertuntur illuc unde orta sunt'; trans. a Religious of CMSV, in Hugh of St Victor, *Selected Spiritual Writings* (New York, 1962), p. 171. Cf. Eccles. 3:1, 20.

⁶⁴ *De vanitate*, col. 711: 'futura prospicere aut praeterita meminisse'.

⁶⁵ *De vanitate*, cols 710–11.

⁶⁶ *In Somnium* I.8.4, p. 37; trans. W. H. Stahl (New York, 1952), p. 121: 'prudentiae esse mundum istum et omnia quae in mundo insunt divinorum contemplatione despicere omnemque animae cogitationem in sola divina dirigere'.

⁶⁷ *De vanitate*, col. 713; trans., p. 173: 'quod transeunt diligo, quia ex ipsa mutatione... ad transeundum hinc amplius inardesco'.

Mutability is actually a vehicle for progress towards the eternal, and therefore Soul admires and loves it.

But Soul still needs a stable point from which both to view and to experience this progress. Historical perspective provides this. The eye within (*oculus cordis*) must come to see all times at once ('praeterita, praesentia et futura simul respicit').⁶⁸ This perspective resembles the divine one—an eternal, immutable present.⁶⁹ But this vision also depends on and requires engagement with the mutable. In the prelapsarian state, humanity experienced time as having a *telos*, bringing one closer to God; after the Fall, in the words of Grover Zinn, time no longer seems teleological 'for this perception of the external disorder in the world is grounded in a disorder within man'.⁷⁰ An understanding of the sweep of time, therefore, is restorative, helping to provide stability and raise the soul towards God's own vision. What Hugh is really evoking, then, is the perspective of prophets such as Solomon, who are granted insight into the divine perspective on time and history. These are prophets who see not only the future, but the present and the past as well.⁷¹

To evoke and cultivate such a vision, Hugh draws upon an image he often uses to describe the soul's journey to God: Noah's ark.⁷² The world with all its mutability is like a flood: those who love it are shipwrecked by its overpowering waters. God is in a high place, the world in a low one, and the human soul is in the middle (*in medio*), between the immutable and the mutable. The soul will sink beneath the waves if it gives in to a disordered love of transient things. But it has the power to escape the flood if it learns to overcome its scattered self and gather itself into a unified

⁶⁸ *De vanitate*, col. 704.

⁶⁹ Cf. Boethius' well-known definition of eternity: 'Eternity is a possession of life... simultaneously entire and perfect, which has no end' ('aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio'), *De consolazione* V.p.6.4; trans. J. Relihan (Indianapolis, IN, 2001), p. 144.

⁷⁰ 'Historia fundamentum est: The Role of History in the Contemplative Life According to Hugh of St Victor', in G. Shriver (ed.), *Contemporary Reflections on the Medieval Christian Tradition* (Durham, NC, 1974), p. 152.

⁷¹ Cf. Hugh's description of the prudent prophetic vision in *In Ecclesiasten* (col. 146): 'omnia praeterita et futura praesentia sunt'. In *De archa Noe*, Hugh explicitly says that the human mind can hold all three times together as God's can: 'ita etiam in mente nostra praeterita, praesentia, et futura per cogitationem simul subsistunt', ed. P. Sicard, CCCM 176 (Turnhout, 2001) II.1.

⁷² *De archa Noe* and *Libellus de formatione arche* (also CCCM 176) are two other ark texts. These treatises lie mainly outside the scope of this chapter, since *De vanitate* is more explicitly connected to Ecclesiastes. Recent scholarly discussions of them include C. Rudolph, *First, I Find the Center Point: Reading the Text of Hugh of Saint Victor's The Mystic Ark* (Philadelphia, PA, 2004); and M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2008), *passim*.

whole. To do so it must seek the unifying *ratio* beneath the bewildering multiplicity of nature and time, where it may at last find rest.⁷³ This rest provides consolation in the face of suffering, a key element of Hugh's meditations on history and central also to traditional understandings of the purpose of prophetic vision.⁷⁴ The vehicle for this self-gathering out of the flood is the ark, which should, for Hugh, exist in the human heart.⁷⁵ The ark touches the mutable waters with its keel, yet its saving wood floats on top of them and stretches up to the immutable divine heavens.⁷⁶

In the dialogue, Soul asks how to enter this ark, and Reason's answer follows that of Solomon's: the mind's eye (*oculus mentis*) must rise through the visible things of Creation that are likenesses (*similitudines*) of the invisible.⁷⁷ A person can follow the invisible traces of Creation inwardly to find the same pattern within, and there find God. This is to enter the ark, where the world is outside and God is within. This is not, however, a radical interiority 'irrespective of the order or disposition or intelligibility of nature'.⁷⁸ To build the ark is, for Hugh, to unite the most inward movement with the most outward.⁷⁹ Hugh reveals this by articulating in *De vanitate* what Solomon left unsaid in Ecclesiastes. The real purpose of the work of Creation is only revealed through the work of restoration, which operates through time but is not enslaved to it.⁸⁰ As Hugh shows, this work of restoration is fully seen only in history.

What has been scattered by disordered attachment to the work of Creation must be gathered again by attachment to the work of redemption. That restoration occurs through the very cause of dissolution,

⁷³ *De vanitate*, col. 713–4. Augustine uses a similar image: he says his life is stretched through time, and Christ has gathered him up ('conligar') to follow one path, so that he becomes 'not stretched out in distraction but extended in reach' ('non distentus sed extensus'), *Confessiones* XI.29, i, p. 163; trans., p. 244. Cf. also *Confessiones* XIII.20, where Augustine links the tumultuous sea of Creation to Adam's sin.

⁷⁴ Gregory the Great, for instance, says of Ezechiel that he was sent into captivity specifically to console (*consolari*) the people through his vision of future history (*ventura*): *In Hiez.* I.18.

⁷⁵ *De vanitate*, col. 714: 'quamdam specialis arcae formam in corde humano effingas'. Carruthers points out that the word *arca* also referred to a wooden chest for holding books and that Hugh draws on this association in his *Chronicon*, where the heart as *arca* becomes memory's storage box for the learning of history: *Book of Memory*, p. 51. My point is that Hugh's conception of memory also has a spiritual function larger than the pedagogical one which Carruthers discusses.

⁷⁶ *De vanitate*, col. 715.

⁷⁷ *De vanitate*, col. 715.

⁷⁸ Chenu, *Nature*, p. 64. Chenu accuses Augustine of favouring this view. Cf. O'Donnell's note that, in some places, Augustine sees time as a trace (*vestigium*) of the eternal, but that *Confessiones* expresses the total contrast between God's transcendence and our temporal fragmentation: *Confessiones*, iii, p. 278.

⁷⁹ Zinn, 'Historia fundamentum', p. 135.

⁸⁰ *De vanitate*, col. 716.

namely the variety of historical events, which refreshes because it takes account of the scattered self's need for multiplicity, while its ordered nature points towards something higher. Though Solomon was granted contemplative wisdom in his time, the fullness of God's work is most evident to those living after the Incarnation, that is, to those who can see and internalize not only the patterns of nature but also a wider course of history. Just as time enslaved man, so it must free him. This is the paradoxical element in Hugh's thought: what led people away (*exitus*) is the very path they must humbly travel back (*reditus*), and so history, read correctly, itself takes on a sacramental character.⁸¹ Contemplatives must thus become prophetic historians, not in the sense of predictors of the future but as discerners of the pattern which underlies the flux of individual and social experience.

De vanitate insists that history is humanity's contemplative guide. In the dialogue, therefore, Reason urges Soul to contemplate, not the cycles of nature, but the works of God as they are extended over the whole of time.⁸² Soul now has a way of ordering the apparently meaningless events alluded to in Ecclesiastes, placing them in three periods of sacred history: natural law (from Adam to Moses), written law (from Moses to Christ), and grace (from Christ till the end of the world) in a narrative sequence (*series narrationis*).⁸³ These periods tell the standard Christian story of man's restored relationship to God through the Incarnation, but Hugh's historical awareness also raises a distinctive question for him: why did God take so long to complete the restoration process?⁸⁴ The answer is that sinful humanity needed that time to regain, by revelation progressing slowly and gradually through those three periods, the self-knowledge sufficient for knowledge of God.⁸⁵ In *De vanitate*, Hugh shows how this external tripartite ordering of history should then become a cultivated

⁸¹ Hugh here notes that sacraments were made in various forms so as to refresh (*reficere*): *De vanitate*, col. 716. Chenu argues (*Nature*, p. 117) that it is precisely in twelfth-century discussions of the sacraments that the symbolism of nature and of history merge, for the sacraments are both mystical and historic acts of Christ using natural elements.

⁸² *De vanitate*, col. 717: 'cogitationem tuam ab exordio mundi usque ad finem saeculi in contemplationem mirabilium Dei ducis'. This quotation highlights a point made by Chenu (*Nature*, pp. 170–1) that, in the twelfth century, the bringing together of the words *mundus* and *saeculum* signified the new historical awareness: 'a very keen perception of the coherence of cosmic time with historical time', i.e. a 'mysterious yet intelligible order' revolving along with the physical world.

⁸³ *De vanitate*, col. 733.

⁸⁴ He asks this explicitly in *De divinitate* (p. 924): 'Posset enim aliquis querere quare Deus adventum suum tam diu distulerit'.

⁸⁵ *De sacramentis* I.8.11.

internal order, namely, the soul's gradual movement towards the grace of Christ.⁸⁶

The way to create this internal order is to build a well-ordered ark, and history provides the blueprint. To contemplate history is to measure out one's ark: 'as if you measured in your heart three hundred cubits' length'.⁸⁷ History provides the contemplative frame.⁸⁸ In another work, the *De archa Noe*, Hugh describes the ark in greater detail, following Origen's depiction of the ship as a pyramid: resting on a quadrangular base, with the corners drawn up gradually, the ark 'narrowed at the top to the space of a single cubit'.⁸⁹ The length of the structure refers to history from the beginning of the world to the end, its width to all believers, and its height consists of the books of Scripture. In its spiritual meaning (*spiritualiter*), the ark is 'a human soul rising out of this world towards God, and, as it rises, [it] gather[s] itself ever more and more into a unity'.⁹⁰ When this building process is complete, the individual has internalized history. Within this ark of the heart, therefore, someone can, as it were, take a tour and see how the entire pattern of history has become the pattern of one's soul:

We will take a walk through all the works of our restoration from the beginning to the end of the world, taking the things that happened and the deeds of men according to the successive periods of time.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Chenu contrasts the 'temporal realism' of Hugh's time-specific revelations with Peter Abelard's belief that the unity of faith required its contents to remain unchanged, leading to Abelard's claim that faithful people in the Old Testament had explicit knowledge of Christ. For Abelard, 'the coefficient time modified [the faith] only externally, as a mere circumstance': *Nature*, p. 172. Hugh critiques this idea, though he accepts a basic content of faith that does persist over time: *De sacramentis* I.10.6.

⁸⁷ *De vanitate*, col. 717; trans., p. 177: 'quasi trecentorum cubitorum longitudinem in corde tuo metiris'.

⁸⁸ Coolman draws attention to Hugh's image of exegesis (in *Didascalicon* V.2) as the artistic endeavour of playing the lyre, with the instrument's curving wood frame as the historical sense binding together the strings of the other senses, which can be played in beautiful harmony: 'Pulchrum esse', p. 188. There is a suggestive connection between the image of the lyre and the ark's curving wood frame binding together man's thoughts in preparation for contemplative harmony. To build this frame is an artistic endeavour in itself. Hugh's source for the lyre image is Augustine's *De civ.* XVI.2.

⁸⁹ *De archa Noe* I.4, p. 18; trans., a Religious of CMSV, in Hugh of St Victor, *Selected Spiritual Writings* (New York, 1962), p. 60: 'usque ad summum in angustum attractis, in spatium unius cubiti fuisse collectam'.

⁹⁰ *De archa Noe* IV.2; trans., p. 126: 'imaginemur quasi humanum animum de hoc mundo sursum ad Deum ascendentem, et in ascendendo magis semper ac magis in unum sese colligentem'.

⁹¹ *De vanitate*, col. 720; trans., p. 181: 'Deambulabimus per cuncta opera restaurationis nostrae ab exordio usque ad consummationem saeculi secundum decursum temporum, eventus rerum et facta hominum'.

This tour accomplishes what Hugh urges in *In Ecclesiasten*: imitate your material.⁹² The *materia* here is the matter of history. Hugh takes the most external matter and makes it the most internal. As a result, the soul no longer belongs to time precisely because it has properly ordered time's own material to fortify itself.⁹³ From within the ark, the individual can engage in action with the world, yet always float upon it in contemplation. This is how the 'ascent of individual men to God is an exact replica of the ascent of the human race throughout history'.⁹⁴ To know one's inner historical order is to know both who one is and where one is. It is to be able to answer the question God asked Adam in hiding, 'where are you?'⁹⁵

During this tour of the ark's material, Soul learns to discern the difference between sacred and secular history. This discernment begins with a rereading of the scriptural narrative of restoration, which causes Soul to express her admiration for how God's *providentia* has arranged everything, an arrangement (*dispositio*) that is also God's way of speaking to us.⁹⁶ At the same time, Hugh indicates that these words of sacred history must be clearly heard through the competing din of profane history. Reason shows kingdoms of the world following one upon another in bloodshed, a meaningless sequence, as Ecclesiastes had shown: Syria, Asia, Greece, and Rome all drowned in blood through successions of power. This constitutes the fluctuating instability (*fluctuationes*) of secular history: 'with agitations one after the other, the world can never be stable'.⁹⁷ The ordered narrative of sacred history is the antidote.

But Hugh is not making a straightforward contrast between Scripture and all other history. He treats the Incarnation (along with the institution of the sacraments) as the central, defining event of sacred history, but he does not think that it is the end-point of this history or of the work of restoration—the ark's keel stretches through the Sixth Age of the world until the end of time. For Augustine, all meaningful (that is, sacred) history ended with Christ, leaving the Sixth Age a period of waiting for the final age, without any discernible historical patterns.⁹⁸ Hugh's optimistic sense of the naturalness and potential goodness of time points him to an emphasis different from Augustine's, and indeed from many of Augustine's successors.⁹⁹ For one thing, Hugh's greater reliance on a

⁹² See p. 23.

⁹³ Disordered internalizing of time causes corruption, however: *In Ecclesiasten*, col. 228.

⁹⁴ Southern, 'Hugh of St Victor', p. 169.

⁹⁵ *In Ecclesiasten*, col. 166: 'ubi es?' ⁹⁶ *De vanitate*, cols 724–5.

⁹⁷ *De vanitate*, col. 733: 'alternis agitationibus mundus nunquam stabilis esse potest'.

⁹⁸ See the Introduction, p. 14.

⁹⁹ Despite, for instance, the greater ease with which Gregory the Great could find an indication of God's work in a triumphant Christendom, Gregory still read history as a sign

tripartite scheme of history (nature, law, grace) rather than the seven-fold one, emphasizes the current, Sixth Age as one of grace. Furthermore, although the height of his ark's pyramid is an ascent through Scripture, its length is not merely the history contained within Scripture; it is *all* history. His survey continues past Scripture, beyond the mid-point of Christ, suggesting that even contemporary history is a discernible part of sacred history and therefore a subject for meditative study. The twelve disciples, he says, provided the world with new examples (*novi exemplares*) for this age of grace, so that they might carry forward the old patterns (*veteres figurae*) in a new way.¹⁰⁰ Hugh goes beyond the Acts of the Apostles, speaking not only of the martyrs of the early church but also of the desert monks who have added to the flowerings of grace, as have the Constantinian Church, the Church Fathers, and saints such as Martin and Benedict.¹⁰¹ Construction of the ark also involves listing the popes up to Hugh's own time.¹⁰² Sacred history continues to act as a sign of the gradual process of redemption and renewal up to the present day. Disciplined meditation on this sign gives rise to the perspective of a prophet.

III. INSPIRATION AND THE EXPANSION OF PROPHECY

Hugh's extension of sacred time into the present had significant implications for the expansion of access to prophetic inspiration. Since Hugh considered the reading of history to be a form of exegesis, his distinct attitude towards exegesis shows how he gave new force to old assumptions. As we have seen, the traditional patristic notion of exegesis considered it an inspired, prophetic task. The twelfth century straightforwardly accepted and promoted this idea, with Alan of Lille (c.1128–1202) one example

of the imminent Apocalypse, in which all post-Constantinian history was a period of peaceful waiting for the end, rather than one of renewal. See Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 40, 52ff. In the eighth century, Bede, too, agreed with Augustine's assessment of the Sixth Age; Markus, *Bede and the Tradition of Ecclesiastical Historiography* (Jarrow on Tyne, 1975), p. 14. On the dominance of Augustine's historical model until the twelfth century, see also G. Bischoff, 'Early Premonstratensian Eschatology: The Apocalyptic Myth', in E. R. Elder (ed.), *The Spirituality of Western Christendom* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1976), p. 53.

¹⁰⁰ *De vanitate*, col. 735.

¹⁰¹ *De vanitate*, col. 738–9.

¹⁰² This happens not in *De vanitate* but in *De formatione arche* II, pp. 130–1. The image of the ark as the life of the Church with the sacraments is also at work here; see *De archa Noe* I.5.

among many: ‘*Prophet*: . . . an expositor of holy Scripture’.¹⁰³ But what sort of inspiration did an exegete have, and how did it compare to the inspiration of a scriptural prophet? Hugh tried to answer these questions, and in doing so, he significantly raised the standing of exegetes.

In the *Didascalicon*, Hugh divides each testament of Scripture into three parts: the Old Testament contained Law, Prophets, and Hagiography, while the New Testament contained Evangelists, Apostles, and—remarkably—Church Fathers (along with decretals).¹⁰⁴ This division of the New Testament—with the Church Fathers and other ecclesiastical writings as an extension of Scripture—had no precedent. The word *inspiratio* had long been applied to Church councils, in so far as they represented the Holy Spirit’s guidance in ‘a determination affecting the life of the Church’.¹⁰⁵ There were, furthermore, certain predecessors of Hugh’s who, beginning in the tenth century, had spoken of the direct inspiration of the Fathers, predecessors such as the archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc (d.1089), and students of Anselm of Laon.¹⁰⁶ But no one before Hugh had linked the Fathers so explicitly to the canon of Scripture itself,¹⁰⁷ and his systematic presentation in ‘possibly the most widely read . . . summary of the canon’ that century gave the notion particular strength.¹⁰⁸

Hugh’s concern to find a place for the *patres* indicates not only a desire to establish a scriptural canon, but, more significantly, an enhanced appreciation of exegetical inspiration, as well as uncertainty over the distinction between pre- and post-Incarnational prophecy. There has been some scholarly disagreement over the meaning of Hugh’s New Testament arrangement, especially because Hugh himself offers conflicting descriptions. In some writings, for example, he seems to treat patristic texts as akin to the Old Testament deuterocanonical books such as Maccabees and Tobit.¹⁰⁹ But if this designation places the Fathers outside the main current of canonical revelation, it still ties them to Scripture. In

¹⁰³ *Distinctiones dictionum theologicarum* (PL 210.912): ‘*Propheta* . . . [d]icitur expositor sacrae Scripturae’. For the patristic notion, see the Introduction, pp. 14–15.

¹⁰⁴ *Didascalicon* IV.2.

¹⁰⁵ Y. Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, trans. M. Naseby and T. Rainborough (London, 1966), p. 128.

¹⁰⁶ See Congar, *Tradition*, pp. 92–3; and R. Berndt, ‘Gehören die Kirchenväter zur Heiligen Schrift? Zur Kanontheorie des Hugo von St Viktor’, *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie*, 3 (1988), pp. 194, 197.

¹⁰⁷ R. Baron, *Science et sagesse chez Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Paris, 1957), p. 104.

¹⁰⁸ C. Linde, ‘Twelfth-Century Notions of the Canon of the Bible’, in J. Nelson and D. Kempf (eds), *Reading the Bible in the Middle Ages* (London, 2015), p. 10. I thank Dr Linde for sending me, in my final stages of writing, a copy of her essay before its publication.

¹⁰⁹ *De scripturis*, col. 16: ‘These writings of the Fathers (“scripta Patrum”) are not counted in the text of divine Scripture (“in textu divinarum Scripturarum”), just as in the Old

his *De divinitate*, Hugh excludes the *patres* from the central canon of Scripture (*textus divinarum Scripturarum*) because they 'do not add new things to the previous writings but explain obscure things'.¹¹⁰ A similar impulse motivates Hugh's rejection elsewhere of the label 'vates' for the Septuagint translators (*interpretes*), since one could then call Cicero, as a translator (*interpres*) of Greek works, a *vates*.¹¹¹ At the same time, confusingly, in the very passage in Hugh's *De divinitate* in which he excludes the *patres* from the *textus* of Scripture, he does not exclude them from the third order of the New Testament, but rather places them in correspondence with Old Testament Hagiography.¹¹² Elsewhere, though, Hugh shows uncertainty because of the great number of patristic writings. In the *Didascalicon* (which includes the *patres* in the canon), he states that 'their works are so limitless that they cannot be numbered';¹¹³ in the *Chronicon*, though, it is this same point which seems to argue against their inclusion, 'for number cannot signify the writings of the Fathers, nor are they counted in the text of the divine page'.¹¹⁴ Nonetheless, the *Chronicon*, like *De divinitate*, goes on in its very next sentence to insist on identifying the *patres* as the 'third part of the New Testament'.¹¹⁵ Despite having some sense of a core text of canonical writings, Hugh thus seems to have seen the New Testament as essentially open-ended.¹¹⁶ Ultimately,

Testament there are certain books which are not written in the canon ("in canone") and yet are read'. Hugh cites (cols 16–17) the Books of Wisdom, Maccabees, and Tobit.

¹¹⁰ p. 917; trans. C. Evans, in Coolman and Coulter (eds), *Trinity and Creation*, p. 117: 'Libri autem patrum sub numero non cadunt. Sunt autem patres qui non prioribus scripturis nova addunt, sed qui obscura exponunt, ut est beatus Augustinus, Gregorius, Hieronymus, Beda et alii sancti patres'.

¹¹¹ *Adnotationes elucidatoriae in Pentateuchon*, PL 175.31–2: 'Aliud est enim esse vatem, aliud interpretem. ... Sic igitur si Septuaginta interpretes vates dicimus, quia interpretes fuerunt, Tullium quoque, qui interpres fuit, vatem esse dicemus'. This is contrary to Augustine's impulse, in *De civ.* XVIII.43, to call the Septuagint prophetically inspired. Instead, Hugh follows closely Jerome's rejection of that inspiration: *Prologus in Pentateucho*, in Weber (ed.), *Biblia sacra*, pp. 3–4.

¹¹² p. 917; trans., p. 117: 'these three groups of the New Testament correspond to those three groups of the Old Testament: the gospels correspond to the Law, the apostles to the prophets, and the fathers to the Hagiographers' ('evangelium legi respondet, apostoli prophetis, patres hagiographis').

¹¹³ IV.2, p. 274; trans. p. 104: 'tam infinita sunt, ut numerari non possint'.

¹¹⁴ Cited by Berndt (from a manuscript not used in the edition; see p. 20 n. 12), 'Kirchenväter', p. 195 n. 35: 'Nam patrum scripta numerus non signat neque in textu divine pagine computantur'.

¹¹⁵ 'Kirchenväter', p. 195 n. 35: 'Tercia pars novi testamenti que patrum scripta continet'.

¹¹⁶ Linde, 'Twelfth-Century Notions', p. 13. Relevant here is the twelfth century's lack of a fully developed sense of the Scriptures (*Scripturae*) as one book. The word *Biblia* as a singular noun was rarely used during this period: J. Châtillon, 'La Bible dans les écoles du XIIe siècle', in P. Riché and G. Lobrichon (eds), *Le moyen âge et la Bible* (Paris, 1984), p. 164.

therefore, Hugh accepts a continuous stream of inspiration that seems to collapse the distinctions between prophet and exegete, even while concerned about its overflowing boundaries. His influence ensured that others would have to face similar questions.¹¹⁷

Hugh's acceptance of this overflowing stream of inspiration is significant in ways modern scholars have not sufficiently stressed, for it highlights the effects of his historical consciousness. Rainer Berndt has argued that much of Hugh's inclusion of the *patres* stems from his desire for harmonious order (paralleling the three parts of the Old Testament), in which the *patres* have authority as initiators of a canon-building process.¹¹⁸ Christopher Evans, moreover, has claimed that Hugh is most likely 'simply affirming a traditional list of sanctioned books' which were part of liturgical usage instead of secular, philosophical texts.¹¹⁹ Both arguments miss the significance of inspiration in the age of grace. First of all, Hugh could have easily chosen another tripartite structure: a common New Testament scheme was Historic books (the Gospels and Acts), Epistolary or Didactic (e.g. the Pauline texts) and Prophetic (Revelation).¹²⁰ Instead, Hugh effectively replaces the Prophetic—and the apocalyptic—with the *patres*. Most importantly, Hugh's reluctance to separate patristic writings from Scripture signifies his conviction that divine eloquence can speak—and be authoritative—in a multiplicity of ways.¹²¹

The third order of the New Testament in the age of grace also reinforces Hugh's notion of 'progressive sacramental revelation' over time, which was evident in *De vanitate*.¹²² There is obviously greater knowledge and

¹¹⁷ Peter the Chanter (d.1197), for instance, followed Hugh in placing the 'scripta patrum' in the New Testament: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 772, *In Psalmos*, fol 1r. Thus Linde's claim that Hugh's reflections on the canon found a 'very limited uptake' needs reconsideration, since she posits Robert of Melun (d.1167) as 'the only twelfth-century author who actively engaged with Hugh's position', and he rejected it: 'Twelfth-Century Notions', p. 14. Worth noting, too, is that later twelfth-century writers continued to accept patristic inspiration: e.g. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, ed. C. C. J. Webb, ii (Oxford, 1909) VIII.1.

¹¹⁸ 'Kirchenväter', p. 195.

¹¹⁹ Translator's note to *De divinitate*, p. 117 n. 20.

¹²⁰ Baron, *Science et sagesse*, p. 104. This tripartite scheme was used by Junilius Africanus in his mid-sixth-century *Instituta regularia divinae legis*, ed. H. Kihn, in *Theodor von Mopsuestia und Junilius Africanus als Exegeten* (Freiberg, 1880) 1.3–5. Cassiodorus recommended Junilius' work and summarized Augustine's and Jerome's grouping of the New Testament into four parts: Gospels, Epistles, Acts, Revelation: *Institutiones* I.10, 12–13.

¹²¹ Baron argues that Hugh sees *sacra Scriptura* as having a 'double signification', a narrow one for inspired books received under Church authority, and a broad one for those without the same authority but nonetheless with a certain edifying strength: *Science et sagesse*, p. 104. Baron goes too far, however, in equating Hugh's concept with Abelard's extension of inspiration to pagans (p. 105 n. 47).

¹²² The phrase is Harkins's (*Reading*, p. 243), who nonetheless does not address the issue of progress *during* the age of grace.

experience of Christ after the Incarnation, but is there progress within the final age itself? Hugh's attitude towards the Fathers suggests, like *De vanitate's* sacred history, an extension of revelation beyond the age of the apostles. Hugh does not explicitly state that his own age has greater knowledge than the apostles', but neither does he say that apostolic examples are the only new ones. The movement of time grants a greater understanding of the past, and the Holy Spirit continues to inspire people in manifold ways as the Church moves along the keel of the ark of history. Hugh's acknowledgement that the *patres* added nothing new to the rest of Scripture gave weight to the past, but his simultaneous close identification of prophetic Scripture with the writings of *interpreters* of that Scripture suggests he did not see sacred history as so neatly concluded. In this apparent multiplication of sacred texts, Hugh emphasizes that the sacred can still be seen in the secular, even if these are not identical. Hugh recognized the tensions between the revelations of a canonical text created in the past and the continual movement of history, and he sought a particular balance between old and new.

Several of Hugh's contemporaries also had an optimistic sense of sacred history's extension into the present, but they drew different conclusions about precisely *how* the Spirit worked in the current age of grace. On the one hand, there were a small number who professed the experience of direct prophetic vision—what they called the spirit of prophecy (*spiritus prophetiae*)—like the prophets of old. Such a gift was generally assumed to be a rare thing after the early Church, so only exceptional visionaries such as Hildegard of Bingen were willing to claim it for themselves.¹²³ On the other hand, there were those like Hugh, with an elevated sense of the continuous work of the Spirit through inspired exegesis of prophetic visions—a gift often called the spirit of understanding (*spiritus intelligentiae*).¹²⁴

Some contemporaries invoked this *spiritus intelligentiae*, this gift of inspired exegesis, to justify their insights and experiences in more radical ways than Hugh did. One such exegete was Rupert of Deutz (d.1129), an older contemporary of Hugh's and a Benedictine monk who took an especially keen interest in the Holy Spirit. His composition on the workings of the Trinity in history (*De sancta Trinitate et operibus eius*, completed 1116), the 'largest ever of its kind',¹²⁵ devoted its third part to the Holy Spirit's role from the Incarnation to the Last Judgement. Like Hugh, Rupert emphasized the continuing revelation of the Spirit, filling

¹²³ R. Lerner, 'Ecstatic Dissent', *Speculum*, 67 (1992), pp. 47–8.

¹²⁴ This phrase derives from scriptural passages such as Job 20:3 and Wis. 7:22.

¹²⁵ J. Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz* (Berkeley, CA, 1983), p. 81.

successive generations—up to his very own—with greater knowledge than their predecessors.¹²⁶ Yet Hugh was cautious on this point, implying only the possibility of greater knowledge and never explicitly asserting that his contemplative methods gave him greater standing than the Church Fathers or that his own writings were part of the open-ended New Testament. Rupert, on the other hand, ultimately derived his understanding of the Spirit not only from Scripture but from ‘his own extraordinary experience’ of the Spirit, which he claimed endowed him with greater understanding of Scripture—a greater *spiritus intelligentiae*—than his predecessors.¹²⁷ In one of a series of visions, which Rupert says occurred through rapture (*raptus*) comparable to Paul’s vision of the third heaven, God opens Scripture to him, with the result that he speaks *better* even than the Church Fathers.¹²⁸

Rupert derived his claims from a belief that was clearly different from Hugh’s about how the gift of the Spirit was bestowed. Unlike Hugh’s emphasis on the disciplined study and contemplation of scriptural and contemporary history, Rupert identifies his gifts of interpretation in a traditional monastic form—albeit a radically heightened one—as ‘a God-given grace rather than the necessary or at least expected product of an institutionalized education’.¹²⁹ Rupert emphasizes that his own Pauline rapture was the result neither of education nor of his own cultivation: spontaneous visions grant him a special experience and justify his new exegesis.¹³⁰ Like the prophets of old, the Spirit came upon him suddenly and uncontrollably in visions that revealed the hidden truths of

¹²⁶ John Van Engen says that Rupert, in the third part of *De sancta Trinitate*, ‘was the first in the twelfth century to carry the history of salvation directly down to the “present age”’: *Rupert*, p. 91. Similar beliefs can be discerned in the canon regular Anselm of Havelberg (d.1158): *Dialogi*, PL 188.1139–1248.

¹²⁷ Van Engen, *Rupert*, pp. 363–4.

¹²⁸ *De gloria et honore Filii hominis super Matthaeum*, ed. R. Haacke, CCCM 29 (Turnhout, 1979) XII, pp. 372–3: ‘et multis sanctorum Patrum sententiis... aliquanta melior dixerim’. Van Engen cites (*Rupert*, p. 54), as another indication of this attitude, the prologue to Rupert’s *De divinis officiis*: ‘Nor do we remove anything from the authority of the ancients (*auctoritas veterum*)... But it was and always will be permitted for anyone to say what he thinks, the faith being preserved’. Rupert also describes the *spiritus intelligentiae* in the third part of *De sancta Trinitate et operibus eius*, ed. R. Haacke, CCCM 24 (Turnhout, 1972) IV.1.

¹²⁹ Van Engen, *Rupert*, p. 352. Elsewhere, Van Engen connects Rupert’s efforts to other ‘new readings’ of the time, including Abelard’s new gloss of Ezekiel: ‘The Twelfth Century: Reading, Reason, and Revolt in a World of Custom’, in Noble and Van Engen (eds), *European Transformations*, p. 33. For Abelard, though, this understanding of Scripture is a gift (*gratia*) from God of the same sort as his understanding of secular writings, that is, it is part of his natural talent (*ingenium*): *Historia calamitatum*, ed. J. Monfrin (Paris, 1959), pp. 69, 82.

¹³⁰ *De victoria verbi dei*, ed. R. Haacke (Weimar, 1970) I.3, p. 8.

God. In contrast, for Hugh, the gift of understanding, the *spiritus intelligentiae*, neither operated as a justification for dissent from tradition nor did it manifest itself in unusual rapturous revelations.

Thus, both Hugh and Rupert were open to the expansion of inspiration, but in different ways. Rupert emphasized the immediate rapture of the Spirit, in which God chose special vehicles of inspiration: very few would attain such visionary heights. At the same time, God could seize anyone, whether learned or simple, just as in the Old Testament. Hugh, on the other hand, recognized prophetic insight into sacred history to be a gift, but he considered it at the same time possible to prepare for and cultivate such a gift through a systematic programme of study and contemplation. This emphasis on the agency of the interpreter broadened potential access to prophecy, but it also, paradoxically, granted such inspired insight a certain elite status, one that required disciplined training and guidance and virtue.

IV. PROPHECY AND PRUDENCE

Virtue was at the heart of Hugh's expansion of prophetic insight via cultivated contemplation of sacred history. In addition to gaining inner stability and enhanced historical understanding, the prophet would also become a model of virtue for others.¹³¹ The contemplative would return from the heights, not in wordless silence, but to teach and restore others 'by example and instruction' ('*exemplo et doctrina*').¹³² This was, for Hugh, the constant task of prophets like Moses, and it was a task embedded in the spiritual formation which took place at the abbey of St Victor, where contemplation became a systematic discipline to be handed on.¹³³

The particular virtue which Hugh ascribes to the prophetic contemplative, as we have seen both in the Ecclesiastes commentary and *De vanitate*, is prudence.¹³⁴ Prudence is the discernment of good and bad, the wisdom (*sapientia*) to discern the proper action amidst a multiplicity of possibilities.¹³⁵ The relationship between prudence (*prudentia*) and providence (*providentia*) had been recognized since classical times and was

¹³¹ Hugh's recognition of both hagiographers and *patres* as sacred writers derives not only from the material (*materia*) of their text but in large part from their standing as holy people, *religiosi viri*: *Didascalicon* IV.1.

¹³² *Didascalicon* V.7, p. 338. Cf. *De tribus diebus* 25–6, pp. 61–3.

¹³³ Zinn, 'Mandala Symbolism and Use in the Mysticism of Hugh of St Victor', *History of Religions*, 12 (1973), p. 320. On Victorine concerns for teaching and formation, see Bynum, *Docere verbo et exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality* (Missoula, MT, 1979).

¹³⁴ See pp. 26, 30.

¹³⁵ Cf. John of Salisbury on prudence's subject being the discernment of truth: *Metalogicon*, ed. J. B. Hall and K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Turnhout, 1991) II.1.

popularized in the Middle Ages by Cicero's definition of the components of prudence as 'memory, understanding, and foresight (*providentia*)'.¹³⁶ A common medieval trope was the three eyes of prudence—past, present, and future—whereby memory, or historical consciousness, was the path to understanding the present and future and thus to knowing the proper action within that present.¹³⁷ Isidore of Seville's etymological definitions of prophecy and of prudence, furthermore, were nearly identical: prudence was seeing far (*porro videns*), while a prophet was one who sees (*videns*) what others do not and speaks as if from afar (*porro fantur*).¹³⁸ This close relationship between natural foresight and a more extraordinary or 'supernatural' insight into the providential workings of history—the insight of the prophet—was recognized by others in the twelfth century, as Peter Lombard's definition of prudence revealed: 'prudencia, id est providentia temporalium'.¹³⁹ Prudence's foresight (*providentia*) was thus 'the soul's power of measuring the future according to the past'.¹⁴⁰

By promoting prudence through its relationship with *providentia*, Hugh also had to consider the uncertainties which this relationship revealed, uncertainties about the differences between natural human effort and spiritual gift. The twelfth-century *Life* of Christina of Markyate, for instance, specifically noted that contemporaries questioned whether her miraculous knowledge of far-off or future events arose from her natural cultivation of *prudencia*.¹⁴¹ Master Anselm of Laon's life evoked similar issues for at least one writer: as a *vir prudens* renowned for his learning (*scientia*) and eloquence, Anselm also seemed to have foretold

¹³⁶ *De inventione*, ed. and trans. H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge, MA, 1968) II.53.160, pp. 326–7: 'Prudentia est rerum bonarum et malorum neutrarumque scientia. Partes eius: memoria, intelligentia, providentia'.

¹³⁷ J. A. Burrow, 'The Third Eye of Prudence', in J. A. Burrow and I. P. Wei (eds), *Medieval Futures: Attitudes to the Future in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 37–48.

¹³⁸ *Etymologiae* VII.8.1, X.1.201. Cf. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, CCSL 38–40, ed. E. Dekkers and J. Fraipont (Turnhout, 1956), 73.25.

¹³⁹ *Commentarium in Epistolam ad Ephesios*, PL 192.173: 'prudence, that is, the foresight of temporal things'. The term *supernaturalis* was not widely used in the twelfth century, but 'the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary manifestations of power' was recognized: C. S. Watkins, *History and the Supernatural in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 18–19. For the history of the concept of the supernatural and the term's emergence in the thirteenth century, see R. Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural* (Cambridge, 2008), ch. 1.

¹⁴⁰ Alan of Lille, *De virtutibus et de vitiis et donis spiritus sancti*, ed. O. Lottin, in *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, vi (Gembloux, 1960) c.1a.2, pp. 51–2: 'Providentia est potentia animi qua metimur futura secundum preterita'. The work dates from c.1160.

¹⁴¹ *The Life of Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth Century Recluse*, ed. C. H. Talbot (Toronto, 1998), 59–60, 71, 76, pp. 140–2, 162, 172. See also S. Justice, 'Did the Middle Ages Believe in their Miracles?', *Representations*, 103 (2008), pp. 15–17.

(‘praenuntiassent’) certain events in Laon.¹⁴² Discerning the origin of such foreknowledge became even more difficult when the effects were less evidently miraculous. A persistent theological discussion thus arose in this period, centred on the interaction between human virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, Hugh of St Victor seems to have been the first to take up this issue, though not in definitive fashion, sometimes separating them and sometimes describing them in the same way.¹⁴³

Contributing to this uncertainty was the widespread use of the terms *inspiratio* and *revelatio* to describe an expansive array of phenomena, from theological knowledge to a natural increase in understanding.¹⁴⁴ Anselm of Havelberg, for instance, spoke of the ‘intimate inspiration’ (‘familiari inspiratione’) by which the Holy Spirit guided Church councils.¹⁴⁵ But civil laws could also be referred to as ‘divinely inspired’ (‘divinitus inspiratae’).¹⁴⁶ Abelard said that the Holy Spirit revealed knowledge of the Assumption to Gregory (‘revelante Spiritu’) and knowledge of the Trinity to pagan philosophers (‘Domino revelante’).¹⁴⁷ More mundanely, the Premonstratensian Philip of Harvengt (d.1183) wrote that God’s revelation (‘Deo revelante’) would help him understand the meaning of a letter written to him.¹⁴⁸ For Bernard of Clairvaux, ‘revelation’ meant any source of wisdom or spiritual understanding, including experience.¹⁴⁹ In the specific context of the contemplative life, Richard of St Victor (d.1173), Hugh’s influential student and successor, spoke of *revelatio* as the goal of the contemplative ascent, but such revelation often

¹⁴² Herman of Tournai (d. c.1147), *Miracula sancte Marie Laudunensis*, ed. A. Saint-Denis (Paris, 2008), p. 132. Like a prophet, Anselm also consoles sweetly (*dulciter consolans*) the inhabitants of Laon after a fire; p. 134. (Herman compares him to Jeremiah.)

¹⁴³ *De sacramentis* II.13.2, cols 526–7; *De quinque septenis*, ed. R. Baron, in *Six opusculs spirituels* (Paris, 1969), p. 102. See also the discussion in O. Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, iii (Gembloux, 1949), pp. 330–1.

¹⁴⁴ Though Congar posits that *inspiratio* was an inner revelation of knowledge while *revelatio* had broader implications, he also acknowledges that the two terms were often used interchangeably: *Tradition*, p. 129.

¹⁴⁵ *Dialogi* II.23, cols 1201–2.

¹⁴⁶ e.g. by John Peckham in the quodlibet transcribed by J. Leclercq, ‘Le magistère du prédicateur au XIIe siècle’, *AHDLMA*, 15 (1946), p. 141.

¹⁴⁷ *Sermones ad virgines Paraclitenses in oratorio eius constitutas*, 26, PL 178.543; *Theologia christiana*, ed. E. M. Buytaert, CCCM 12 (Turnhout, 1969) IV.85, p. 305. Congar notes that, at the time, the text of Rom. 1:19, in speaking of the natural knowledge of God, read ‘Deus enim illis revelavit’, not ‘manifestavit’: *Tradition*, p. 124.

¹⁴⁸ *Epistolae*, Ep. 7, PL 203.57.

¹⁴⁹ *Sermo ad clericos de conversione* 13.25, SBO 4.99; *Sermones in festivitate omnium sanctorum* 4.1, SBO 5.354. Bernard also held that virtue was necessary preparation for contemplation, though, in the end, contemplation, insofar as it was rapture (*raptus*) beyond the mind (*excessus mentis*), had to come as gift: *De consideratione* V.2.3, SBO 3.469; *Sermones de diversis*, 115, SBO 6/1, p. 392. See also Evans, *Bernard of Clairvaux* (Oxford, 2000), p. 54.

required preparation, cultivation.¹⁵⁰ Revelation, cultivated contemplation, and wisdom were thus uneasy bedfellows during this period.¹⁵¹

The virtue of prudence, therefore, is a particularly crucial element in the application of the prophetic model to a broader, more ordinary or natural sense of inspiration. It makes the *spiritus intelligentiae* take on the appearance of a modest gift of understanding. In contrast to Rupert of Deutz's spontaneous visions, Hugh lays out a path—via prudence—for cultivating habitual, regularly accessible, contemplative practices which lead to prophetic insight.¹⁵² The prophet's prudence is nonetheless not secular wisdom, but rather the result of an inspired vision. Revelation thus appears, in Hugh, to be in large part the product of habitual human effort.

Hugh also insisted that the prudent prophet's understanding of sacred history should be accompanied by the cultivation of rhetorical effectiveness for moral guidance. The focus on contemplation at St Victor did not preclude preaching; quite the opposite, in fact.¹⁵³ Victorines took the task very seriously, in line with the teaching role for contemporary prophets outlined by Gregory the Great.¹⁵⁴ Hugh followed Gregory's understanding of sacred history's moral relevance: 'what is said to have been done

¹⁵⁰ Richard of St Victor, *Les douze patriarches ou Benjamin minor*, ed. J. Châtillon and M. Duchet-Suchaux (Paris, 1997) 82, p. 326; *Benjamin maior*, ed. M.-A. Aris, in *Contemplatio: Philosophische Studien zum Traktat Benjamin Maior des Richard von St Victor* (Frankfurt, 1996) IV.21, V.5. See also the discussion in D. Coulter, *Per visibilia ad invisibilia: Theological Method in Richard of St Victor* (d.1173) (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 158–9.

¹⁵¹ Barbara Newman makes this point about revelation and contemplation, focusing on monastic liturgical practice, especially meditations on scriptural scenes: 'What Did It Mean to Say "I Saw"? The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture', *Speculum*, 80 (2005), pp. 1–43. The larger scope of historical meditation found in Hugh's work can be considered an outgrowth of such practices, though Newman does not address the role of historical consciousness, the *spiritus intelligentiae*, or prudence. Scholars have often attributed the varied use of *revelatio* to Augustine's theory of divine illumination: e.g. J. de Ghellinck, 'Pour l'histoire du mot "Revelare", *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 6 (1916), pp. 149–57; and I. C. Levy, *Holy Scripture and the Quest for Authority at the End of the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, IN, 2012), p. 24. Lydia Schumacher's recent book, however, challenges the traditional understanding of Augustine's theory: *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Chichester, 2011).

¹⁵² Hugh's greater emphasis on history, and thus his greater promotion of prudential vision, distinguishes him from Bernard of Clairvaux, who otherwise speaks of contemplation in similar terms.

¹⁵³ H. Feiss, 'Preaching by Word and Example', in Matter and Smith (eds), *Knowledge to Beatitude*, pp. 153–85. Most Victorine preaching seems to have been directed at members of their own community, but the Victorines also influenced, e.g., Maurice de Sully (c.1120–96), a friend of the abbey, and, while bishop of Paris, promoter of pastoral renewal and preaching (Feiss, 'Preaching', pp. 178–80).

¹⁵⁴ In an anonymous Victorine commentary on 1 Corinthians (12:6), prophecy is both the declaration of future events and the adjustment of one's words during preaching according to the needs of one's audience: *Allegoriae in Evangelia et Epistolas Pauli* VI, PL 175.898. For Gregory, see the Introduction, p. 15.

signifies something that ought to be done'.¹⁵⁵ Persuasive and pleasing rhetoric was thus needed to offer moral guidance about the sweep of history.¹⁵⁶ Richard of St Victor summarized well the Victorine conception of the relationship between prophetic prudence and preaching: there are three types of people, *speculativi*, *contemplativi*, and *prophetici*. Speculatives see heavenly secrets 'through a glass darkly', in corporeal forms; contemplatives see the truth revealed (*revelata*) openly and without covering (*involutum*); and prophets 'are those who make known to people the secrets of the divine plan . . . which they know in a heavenly manner from divine revelation (*revelatio*)'.¹⁵⁷ Sacred history must be given prophetic shape by rhetoric, both for the contemplative's own self-understanding and for others.

The Victorine notion of the prophetic contemplative shows the adaptation of ideas which were, in fact, available to a wider literary and historiographical culture. The prophetic shaping of events was understood by twelfth-century writers of history to be a potential part of their rhetorical role; they could give meaningful structure to the flow of time.¹⁵⁸ The historian Otto of Freising (d.1158), a reader of Hugh's work who was acutely attuned to the *mutabilitas rerum*, is one prominent example of this.¹⁵⁹ Otto distinguishes between a primary level of particular events described by 'simple historical diction' (*plana historica dictio*) and a higher level of speech (*oratio*) elevated towards a universalizing, philosophic discourse, but he believes the historian can combine both to produce *historia*.¹⁶⁰ The same principle is at work in English chronicler William of Newburgh's (d. c.1198) claim that those who can interpret the events he has related are prophets.¹⁶¹ The interpreter arranges what has

¹⁵⁵ *De sacramentis*, prol.4, col. 185; trans., p. 5: 'per id quod factum dicitur, aliquid faciendum esse significatur'.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Augustine's insistence that eloquence's role is to 'make clear what was hidden (*quod latebat*)': *De doct.* IV.11.26, pp. 228–9.

¹⁵⁷ *Super exiit edictum*, ed. J. Châtillon and W. J. Tulloch (Paris, 1951), 3, pp. 76–8: 'Viri prophetici sunt qui divini consilii archana que celitus ex divina revelatione cognoscunt . . . hominibus innotescere faciunt'.

¹⁵⁸ J. Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 277, 316–17. Carruthers argues that training in rhetorical memory and composition provides common ground between the intellectual elite and educated members of the wider literary culture: *Book of Memory*, pp. 237ff., 239 n. 12.

¹⁵⁹ *Chronica*, ed. A. Hofmeister, SRG 45 (Hanover, 1912) I.prol., p. 10; VI.prol., pp. 261–2. For Otto's knowledge of Hugh, see C. Mierow, introduction in Otto of Freising, *The Two Cities* (New York, 2002), pp. 13–14.

¹⁶⁰ *Gesta Frederici I imperatoris*, ed. G. Waitz, SRG 46 (Leipzig, 1912) I.prol., p. 12: 'ad altiora velut phylosophica acumina attollatur oratio'.

¹⁶¹ *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, ed. R. Howlett, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, i (London, 1884–9; repr. Wiesbaden, 1964) IV.6, p. 308: 'Let each interpret (*interpretetur*) as he wishes the marvellous sign (*signum mirabile*), the

been seen and gives the particulars of history universal significance. Hugh elevated this fundamental twelfth-century principle of cognition and interpretation to the level of sacred history. In other words, prophecy was at the root of all proper comprehension of the world, including its hidden realities, and it was accessible to all who could cultivate it well.

To be sure, twelfth-century historians did not always express confidence in their abilities to grasp a total vision of sacred history. The flux of time and the difficulties of discerning meaning in history were common tropes in their writings, and they could be hesitant to ascribe specific divine causes to events.¹⁶² Orderic Vitalis was willing to call his account of history 'inspired' ('divinitus inspiratum'), but he still found much in the divine plan that was inscrutable, and he hoped for readers who would be inspired interpreters of the events and thus draw moral profit from his account.¹⁶³ But Hugh's optimistic principles were nonetheless recognized by historians as underlying any attempts to reveal the sacred in historiography. Hugh is explicitly cited as a model, for instance, in John of Salisbury's prologue to his *Historia pontificalis*, which goes on to say, 'these chroniclers have had a single purpose: to relate noteworthy matters, so that the invisible things of God (*invisibilia Dei*) may be clearly seen by the things that have been done (*facta*)'.¹⁶⁴

Ultimately, Hugh's concept of prophecy as prudence was the same concept that allowed twelfth-century historians to claim that knowledge of the past gave them an ethically significant understanding of the present and the future. This was not simply the traditional claim that history displayed good and bad examples for imitation or rejection; it was a claim that history bestowed the wisdom needed to discern the proper course of action in future circumstances.¹⁶⁵ Such arguments had the backing of ancient authority, since the same idea had been put forth in the teachings

existence of which I, certainly a simple narrator (*simplex narrator*), learned, for I am not a prophetic interpreter (*praesagus interpres*)'.

¹⁶² As Carl Watkins notes, twelfth-century historians understood theological optimism about discerning the sacred in history, but in practice, 'chroniclers found difficulty in trying to reconcile revelation and experience': *History and the Supernatural*, p. 14.

¹⁶³ *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall, iii (Oxford, 1972) VI.1, pp. 214–15: 'let each one according to his ability and desire duly relate what is shown him from on high' ('quod ei divinitus inspiratum fuerit'); vi, XIII.16, pp. 436–7: 'Let each one interpret according to the inspiration he receives from heaven, ("prout sibi divinitus inspiratum fuerit") and if he finds anything profitable to him let him extract matter for his salvation from it as he best judges'.

¹⁶⁴ *Historia Pontificalis*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1986), pp. 3–4 (translation altered). John mentions Hugh (p. 2) as a sacred historian who revealed invisible things from the beginning of the world to the time of Pope Innocent II.

¹⁶⁵ A. Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1978), p. 131.

of Roman rhetoricians.¹⁶⁶ But twelfth-century historians were particularly keen on promoting this principle of ethical exemplarity oriented towards the future.¹⁶⁷ Henry of Huntingdon (d. c.1160) summarized this attitude by explaining the basis of history's moral effects: 'History therefore brings the past into view as though it were present, and allows judgement of the future by representing the past'.¹⁶⁸ The historian sets out, like the prophetic preacher, to convey the moral significance of the temporal pattern of events. In the same way, the contemplative exegete becomes a model in word and speech, using his insight and interpretative powers to prudently guide the moral and spiritual restoration both of self and of community.

V. CONCLUSION

For Hugh and his followers, restoring people to their proper nature did not mean rejecting time but rather coming to experience it as it was before the Fall: an ordered sequence that allowed humanity to grow in contemplation of the divine. God works through nature, and people must return to God through the temporal. Hugh's willingness to consider even contemporary history as an intelligible object of deep contemplation suggests an optimism about history that begins to integrate the sacred and the secular. Certainly, Hugh distinguished between the two, yet the infusion of nature with a *ratio* of grace meant that the natural unfolding of time would also offer the means of restoration—the sacred is always found within the *saeculum*. Here, Hugh's emphasis differs significantly from Augustine, whose insistence on man's temporality certainly influenced Hugh, but who had been less willing to describe that temporality as an inherent, and positive, part of nature rather than primarily an internal concept.¹⁶⁹ Thus, Hugh's use of nature as a field for temporal development gives him a greater confidence in the discernment of sacred history within the present age. Augustine's sharp divide between the temporal and

¹⁶⁶ *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, ed. H. Caplan (Cambridge, MA, 1954) III.3.4; IV.9.13; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* III.8.66.

¹⁶⁷ Murray, *Reason*, p. 131.

¹⁶⁸ *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. D. Greenway (Oxford, 1996), prol., pp. 4–5: 'Historia igitur preterita quasi presentia visui representat, futura ex preteritis imaginando diiudicat'. Cf. Abbot Suger (d.1151), *De rebus in sua administratione gestis*, ed. and trans. E. Panofsky, 2nd edn (Princeton, NJ, 1979) 29, pp. 52–3: 'the recollection of the past is the promise of the future' ('praeteritorum enim recordatio futurorum est exhibitio').

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Ocker's claim, for the field of exegesis, that the Victorine theory of biblical signification follows Augustine's model of *verbum* and *res*, but differs by 'insisting that knowledge must be mediated through natural signs, which are... real things external to the soul in nature and not concepts formed in the soul': C. Ocker, *Biblical Poetics Before Humanism and Reformation* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 36. Cf. also p. 32.

the eternal, the secular and the sacred, led him to resist the notion that post-scriptural revelations ought to be integrated into the larger narrative of God's saving work. Hugh, on the other hand, suggests in his meditations on time and in his survey of history that there is a sacred quality to anything that shows how to restore humanity's fallen image, and this integration is one of the major elements underlying the more general twelfth-century awareness of history. As a result, there emerged in this period greater confidence in both the possibility and the importance of identifying patterns and causes, change and renewal, in the present day.

In the process, Hugh clearly reshapes prophecy. As sacred and secular are reintegrated, the line between *spiritus prophetiae* and *spiritus intelligentiae* narrows, as does the line between the spiritual gift of revelation and the natural human effort to cultivate contemplative insights. The interpretation and explanation of history brings temporal confusion under control: historical consciousness is accorded the status of prophetic vision, and its accessibility means it can be part of a growth in prudence. Prophecy is not, for Hugh, a metaphor, but is rather a fundamental mode for the task of contemporary contemplatives, for theologians, and for historians. Richard of St Victor would transmit to successive generations this very close relationship between contemplation and prophetic revelation.¹⁷⁰ Joachim of Fiore would eventually reassert prophecy's focus on the future. But Hugh's model is significant precisely because, as a more ordinary form of prudential wisdom, it permeates the tasks of contemplation, historical writing, and scriptural exegesis.

¹⁷⁰ For Richard's influence, see B. McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the Twelfth Century* (New York, 1994), pp. 398–9.

2

The Scholastic Exegesis of Prophecy

When Peter Lombard (c.1095–1160), in his influential twelfth-century commentary on the Psalms, named David the greatest of the prophets, he laid important groundwork for theological reflection on the varieties of prophetic experience and texts. What was prophecy, and what made a prophet great? Hugh of St Victor had emphasized prophetic writing as a contemplative text which enabled in its readers a perspective on sacred time. If the Psalms, a book that lacked a distinctly historical structure, was the exemplar of prophecy for Peter Lombard, did this produce a view different from the Victorine one, of prophecy as enhanced historical consciousness?

I turn in this chapter to Psalm exegesis of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, since this scriptural book raised some of the most pressing theoretical questions about prophecy's relationship to history, to poetry, and to the authority of the interpreter of Scripture. These issues also emerged in commentaries on other Old Testament books, but certain distinctive elements justify placing the Psalms centre stage. The Psalms penetrated medieval culture to a remarkable degree, beginning with early grammatical education and remaining embedded in liturgical and devotional prayer.¹ At the same time, Psalm exegesis was a key part of the new academic teaching of theology, as professional theologians honed their methods and principles. French cathedral schools were the primary site of these developments, and they gradually established a reputation for the teaching of academic theology as a discipline. As Paris became a hub of European learning, the focus of influential theologians there on David as an exemplary prophet made the Book of Psalms a fundamental text for understanding what scholastic theologians thought prophecy was, especially prophecy that was not apocalyptic. Reflections on the Psalms also had to account for the role of poetry and figurative language in ways that other texts did not.² David, furthermore, had been classed among the

¹ M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2008), p. 121.

² In this regard, two possible exceptions are Lamentations and the Song of Songs: by the end of the period under examination here (in 1319), the Psalms could be classified with them as teaching 'in a hymnodic manner and as if poetically or sung' ('hymnidice et quasi

Hagiographic writers, those who had understanding rather than actual visions.³ This form of ‘intellectual’ prophecy ultimately led theologians to reflect on their own activity as professional academics.

Several aspects of Psalm exegesis deserve attention here, in particular theologians’ interest in the structure of the Psalms and in the nature of David’s inspiration. These facets are significant, firstly, because exegetical wrestling with the structure of the Psalms—and how to teach them—helped promote a particular understanding of prophetic texts in line with scholastic methods of ordering and interpreting. Secondly, theologians began to emphasize the range of prophetic experiences that had affinities with their own work. These two processes helped open up the possibilities for what I am calling ‘broad’ or ‘secondary’ prophecy—the application of the term ‘prophetic’ to activities that were not obviously visionary in nature. We have already seen in Chapter One a form of this secondary prophecy in the promotion of historical insight, and this chapter considers others.

I examine first the Psalm commentaries of two of the most important twelfth-century theologians working in France, Gilbert of Poitiers and Peter Lombard. I also make some comparisons with certain thirteenth-century Dominican commentaries, since members of that order were highly involved in thirteenth-century exegesis of the Psalms at a time when Dominicans were more and more involved in considering the nature of sacred authority. As these theologians used the Psalms to reflect both on the nature of inspired texts and on their own work, their attempts to discern the manifestations of the Holy Spirit led to questions about exactly where to locate the boundaries of sacred inspiration.

I. GILBERT OF POITIERS’S PSALM COMMENTARY

The first major scholastic Psalm exegete of the twelfth century was Gilbert of Poitiers (c.1076–1154), who was connected to schools in Chartres, Laon, and Paris over the course of his career.⁴ Influenced by the example

poetice seu decantative’), in Peter Auriol’s *Compendium Biblie totius* (unloc., 1513), fol. b1r–v.

³ See Ch. 1, pp. 21–2.

⁴ T. Gross-Diaz, *The Psalms Commentary of Gilbert of Poitiers* (Leiden, 1996), pp. 1–2. As Andrew Kraebel has shown, Bruno the Carthusian (d.1101) actually has good claim to be the initiator of some of Gilbert’s methods: ‘Prophecy and Poetry in the Psalms-commentaries of St Bruno and the Pre-Scholastics’, *Sacris Erudiri*, 50 (2011), pp. 413–59. I have chosen to begin with Gilbert, however, not only because his commentary was more widespread, but because several of his concerns, including structure, are less important to Bruno.

of his teacher, Anselm of Laon (d.1117), and by Anselm's recent work on what would become the *Glossa ordinaria*, Gilbert began his Psalm commentary in the mid-1110s in Laon, finishing it after 1135 in Paris.⁵ Gilbert's commentary enjoyed initial success, even becoming the basis for the *Glossa's* version, and his prologue was frequently inserted at the beginning of other commentaries.⁶ Though soon overshadowed by the success of Peter Lombard's commentary (finished 1158), Gilbert's text both influenced Peter's and is revealing in its own right. For Theresa Gross-Diaz, who has examined Gilbert's work most closely, the commentary shows the transfer of scriptural reading 'from the cloister to the classroom'.⁷ Gilbert was the first to use the Psalms as a way of addressing specific theological questions, thus expanding their usage beyond what Marcia Colish calls the 'devotional and hortatory approach'.⁸ One of the tasks facing any medieval theologian who attempted to turn the Psalms into a teaching tool was the imposition of a rational order on the text's bewildering variety. Gilbert's approach to this problem reveals an influential conception of the relationship between prophecy, history, and exegesis.

A crucial element of Gilbert's Psalm commentary is the attachment to it of lengthy prefatory remarks on prophecy, identifying the Psalms as the place to understand what prophecy truly is. This choice had significant implications—not all exegetes had used the Psalms to explain prophecy.⁹ Gilbert's preface relies on a model used for discussing the liberal arts, replacing a treatment of the text's place in philosophy (*pars philosophiae*), the standard for secular works, with one about its place in prophecy (*genus prophetiae*). Prophecy, for Gilbert, is akin to philosophical writing, and, at the same time, it resists secular categories. It is a separate genre with its own rules.¹⁰

⁵ Gross-Diaz, *Psalms Commentary*, pp. 29–31; K. Froehlich, 'Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament in the High Middle Ages', in M. Sæbø et al. (eds), *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation*, i/2 (Göttingen, 2000), p. 502. There is no edition of the commentary, but the preface is printed as *Prologus Commentarii in librum Psalmorum*, ed. D. de Bruyne, in *Préfaces de la Bible latine* (Namur, 1920), pp. 111–12. I have also consulted the entire commentary (misattributed to Clement of Lanthony) in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D.2.1.

⁶ Gross-Diaz, *Psalms Commentary*, p. 29; L. Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria* (Leiden, 2009), pp. 77–8.

⁷ T. Gross-Diaz, 'From *Lectio Divina* to the Lecture Room: The Psalm Commentary of Gilbert of Poitiers', in N. Van Deusen (ed.), *The Place of the Psalms in the Intellectual Culture of the Middle Ages* (Albany, NY, 1999), p. 94.

⁸ M. Colish, *Peter Lombard*, i (Leiden, 1994), p. 167.

⁹ Gregory the Great, for instance, chose Ezekiel in his *In Hiez*. Gilbert follows the example of Cassiodorus' *Expositio Psalmorum*, praef. 1.

¹⁰ *Prologus Commentarii*, p. 111. See also Gross-Diaz, '*Lectio Divina*', p. 94. The phrase 'genus prophetiae' is not original with Gilbert, but he is the first to use it analogously to *pars philosophiae* (Gross-Diaz, '*Lectio Divina*', p. 87). The significance of analogous prefatory

While there was some debate in the Middle Ages over whether David wrote all of the Psalms, Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* set the exegetical standard and established for Latin Christian thinkers certain basic assumptions: composed by David, the Psalms are his prophetic statements about Christ and the Church, which he created in full knowledge of the meaning of his words.¹¹ Gilbert accepts Augustine's principles, and, to explain the form which David's prophecy took, Gilbert follows Cassiodorus' definition: 'Prophecy is therefore divine inspiration or revelation, which proclaims with unshakeable truth the outcome of events'.¹² Gilbert follows Cassiodorus as well in asserting the uniqueness of David's inspiration, noting that the Psalms are also traditionally called the Book of Soliloquies (*soliloquia*) because they are the product of speech communicated by the Holy Spirit directly:

Inspiration also happens when words and deeds cease, the Holy Spirit alone inwardly illuminating. . . . [David], aroused not through exterior words or deeds but taught inwardly by the Holy Spirit, wrote the Soliloquies, that is, the speech of the Holy Spirit.¹³

This inner illumination is clearly based on the Augustinian model of intellectual vision, in which the mind alone is addressed by the Spirit.¹⁴ Yet while Augustine had acknowledged that some people, such as Paul during his momentary rapturous experience, could see, in a purely

treatments of secular and sacred literature is a major feature of A. J. Minnis's *Medieval Theory of Authorship* 2nd edn (Philadelphia, PA, 2010), including pp. 54–5 on Psalm commentaries. While Minnis focuses on the elevating effect prefaces had on the prestige of secular literature, Gross-Diaz views it from the other side, noting, 'How much greater an impact it must have made to hear the Book of Psalms subjected to the same regimen of questions as Vergil or Porphyry! This is not merely Scripture taught in the schoolroom, it is Scripture taught as a scholarly discipline': *Psalms Commentary*, p. 76.

¹¹ For the influence of Augustine's work, see M. Kuczynski, *Prophetic Song: The Psalms as Moral Discourse in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia, 1995), pp. 20–2.

¹² *Prologus Commentarii*, p. 111: 'Est igitur prophetia inspiratio vel revelatio divina, rerum eventus immobili veritate denuntians'. Gross-Diaz makes much of the fact that Cassiodorus' 'aspiratio' has been altered to 'inspiratio,' which, she claims, immediately 'redirect[s] the reader's thought from the celestial "exhalation" of prophetic knowledge to the recipient of the inspiration': *Psalms Commentary*, pp. 87–8. True as this might be, Cassiodorus himself used the word 'inspiratio' later in his preface: *Expositio Psalmorum*, praef.I, p. 9. Nonetheless, Gilbert's alteration became definitive when Peter Lombard took it up as well.

¹³ *Prologus Commentarii*, p. 111: 'Fit etiam inspiratio cessantibus dictis vel factis, solo spiritu sancto interius inlustrante. . . . [David] non . . . per exteriora dicta vel facta excitatus sed solo spiritus sancto intus edoctus, soliloquia id est solius spiritus sancti eloquia scripsit'. Cassiodorus also distinguished David's prophecy from other prophets, though not as precisely, noting his inspiration did not occur through signs or visions or voices: *Expositio Psalmorum*, praef.I, p. 7.

¹⁴ See the Introduction, pp. 12–13.

intellectual manner, 'transparent truth...without any bodily likeness', Augustine did not deny unerring intellectual vision to other prophets since they needed it to understand the meaning of their own visions.¹⁵ Gilbert agrees with Augustine's hierarchy of categories, but he makes intellectual vision a distinct mode, applicable only to the sort of inspiration experienced by David, in which inward vision bypassed external sense data. Thus, David's writing stands out 'in comparison with others'.¹⁶ This is a crucial transformation of Augustine's model, with only the best prophets granted intellectual vision, while the visions of a prophet like Isaiah were assigned to spiritual vision, Augustine's second level.

Gilbert's prologue goes further, linking David's intellectual inspiration to clarity of expression: other prophets said things about Christ diffusely and obscurely (*diffuse et obscure*), but David prophesied more things (*plura*) and did so concisely and openly (*breviter et aperte*).¹⁷ This intellectual gift and its accompanying clarity of language make David supreme, and here the standards of classical rhetoric provided the basis for Gilbert's emphasis. The pairing of the concepts *breviter* and *aperte* was a common one in ancient treatises and an ideal of eloquence proposed for all forms of *narratio*, whether history or poetry.¹⁸ Clarity and brevity did not mean the complete absence of rhetorical ornament—Quintilian, for instance, said eloquence was both elegant (*ornata*) and clear (*perspicua*).¹⁹ When it came to sacred texts, medieval thinkers generally saw rhetoric as a pervasive feature of Scripture.²⁰ There was debate, though, over the role of obscurity in scriptural style. Obscurity was frequently justified as the accommodation of divine language to human understanding, itself a rhetorical principle of choosing what was

¹⁵ *De Gen. litt.* XII.9, 24–5; XII.26, p. 419; trans., J. H. Taylor, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, ACW 42 (New York, 1982), p. 216: 'sine ulla corporis similitudine perspicua veritas cernitur'.

¹⁶ *Prologus Commentarii*, p. 111: 'ad comparationem aliarum scripturarum'.

¹⁷ *Prologus Commentarii*, p. 111.

¹⁸ Brevity and clarity were believed to strengthen the speaker's credibility: Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* IV.2.31. For poetry, see Horace, *Ars poetica*, ed. E. C. Wickham and H. W. Garrod, in *Opera*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1901), ll. 25, 41, 335. For rhetoric as the link between history and poetry, see M. S. Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400–1500* (Manchester, 2011), ch. 2.

¹⁹ *Institutio oratoria* VIII.1.1, p. 425.

²⁰ G. R. Evans (*Old Arts and New Theology* (Oxford, 1980), p. 54) makes the case for Abelard's remark as representative of his era: 'The intention of all Holy Scripture is to teach or move men (*aut docere aut movere*) in the same way as a speech does in the sphere of rhetoric' ('more orationis rhetoricae'), *Commentaria in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos*, ed. E. M. Buytaert, CCCM 11 (Turnhout, 1969), prol., p. 41; trans. *MLTC*, p. 100. The three-fold purpose of rhetoric—*docere, movere, delectare*—was central to classical theory: Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* III.5.2, VIII.praef.7.

appropriate (*aptum*) for a particular audience.²¹ But Augustine had insisted that obscurities in Scripture not be equated with the ornaments of poets.²²

When commentators turned to the Psalms, the relationship between clarity and authority became particularly urgent. For Augustine, the Psalms contained prophetic phrases (*propheticae locutiones*) expressed clearly (*manifeste*).²³ Any obscurities that originally existed—and Augustine admitted there were some—had subsequently become far fewer since the coming of Christ, when the veils of time and of language were pulled back to reveal the clarity of the prophets.²⁴ For Cassiodorus, prophetic language was clear, a reflection of the divine:

The eloquence of the divine law has not been fashioned by human speech. Its impact is not doubtful, confused, or ambiguous. So it does not forgetfully contradict what has gone before; it is not in turmoil through confusion of present events; and it is not deceived by the uncertainties of the future.²⁵

Divine eloquence offered a *ratio*, a rational principle underlying all events that could speak clearly to people. The structure of language mirrored the structure of temporality, producing the clarity of style that reflected the certainty of providence.

Unlike his predecessors, however, Gilbert emphasizes that David's rhetorical clarity is *special*, the sign of his unique inspiration, which distinguished him from other prophets. Jerome had written of Isaiah that his clarity of expression and the certainty of his knowledge made his prophecy seem like history: 'He has set forth the mysteries of Christ and the Church so clearly that you would not think he were prophesying (*vaticinari*) about the future, but rather weaving a history (*historiam texere*) about the past'.²⁶ Gilbert applies this principle to David instead, arguing that David is even clearer than Isaiah because he is more obvious in his

²¹ On appropriateness, see Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VIII.1.1. For scriptural obscurity as profundity, see, e.g., Augustine, *De doct.* IV.8.22.

²² *De vera religione*, ed. G. Green, CSEL 77 (Vienna, 1961) 50.99.

²³ *De civ.* XVII.16, p. 580.

²⁴ *Enarrationes*, 21(II).15, p.126: 'quod velebatur, revelatum est'.

²⁵ *Expositio Psalmorum*, praef.XV., p. 18; trans., p. 36: 'Eloquentia legis divinae humanis non est formata sermonibus, neque confusis incerta fertur ambagibus, ut aut a rebus praeteritis oblivione discedat, aut praesentium confusione turbetur, aut futurorum dubiis casibus eludatur'.

²⁶ *Prologus in Isaiam*, in R. Weber (ed.), *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgata versionem*, 4th edn (Stuttgart, 1994), p. 1096: 'Ita enim universa Christi Ecclesiaeque mysteria ad liquidum persecutus est, ut non eum putes de futuro vaticinari, sed de praeteritis historiam texere'. *Texere* had important implications as a stylistic element in the plausible and effective narration of *res gestae*, according to the principles of classical rhetoric: Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* IX.4.129.

Christological references and less reliant on obscure imagery.²⁷ This allows David to teach well, to shed light on divine mysteries.

Gilbert indeed sees David using his language for traditional rhetorical purposes, not only to teach, but to move and delight.²⁸ David intends to move people's desires (*affectus*) towards praise of God, which requires that he must delight them as well. This, Gilbert insists, David does through the musical qualities of the Psalms as metrical hymns.²⁹ Unlike some of his exegetical precursors, Gilbert does not dismiss the sensual power of poetry or music as dangerous nor highlight as ambivalent the fact that the Psalms' metrical and performative elements delight.³⁰ Instead, he asserts, their musical power gave them a central place in the rituals of the synagogue and now in the Church.³¹

If clarity, therefore, was one major issue Psalm exegetes dealt with, a second issue was their historicity. Gilbert had an interest in the rhetorical effects of the Psalms and the artistic choices of David as musician, but he also had to deal with the Psalms' uncertain relationship to the historical narrative of Scripture, an issue which had vexed other scriptural exegetes. Beryl Smalley cites an anonymous twelfth-century (probable) Victorine who gave up on the problem, stating that the Psalms, along with Job and the Song of Songs, have no useful literal meaning, and so one should proceed directly to allegory.³² The order of the Psalms was a particular conundrum: Augustine had abstained from judging why individual Psalms were placed where they were, trusting that, just as prophets arrange a coherent narrative from the mass of human experience, so did David

²⁷ *In librum Psalmorum*, MS Auct. D.2.1, fol. 35r: 'This narrative is not woven with figures like prophecy but is written clearly like in a gospel' ('ista narratio non tecta figuris sicut prophetia sed manifeste sicut in evangelio').

²⁸ For the classical understanding of rhetoric's ends, see p. 54 n. 20.

²⁹ *Prologus Commentarii*, pp. 111–12. Medieval psalters often contained texts with canticles from other prophets, such as Isa. 12:1 and the song of Moses in Exod. 15:1–20: see, e.g., the thirteenth-century Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 38, fols 132r–38v.

³⁰ Augustine was wary of music's power, feeling moved by it both positively and negatively, and speaking of a 'mysterious inner kinship' (*occulta familiaritas*) between music and people: *Confessiones* X.33.49, i, p. 138; trans. p. 208. Isidore transmitted a further ambivalence about song: the psalms were composed as *carmina*, but the word 'carmen' was derived either from 'carptim' (in different pieces) or because those who sang lost their mind (*carere mentem*): *Etymologiae* I.39.4; VI.2.17. Cassiodorus, though, emphasized the healing effect of the Psalms' music and the words' beauty: *Expositio Psalmorum*, praef. I, II, XV.

³¹ *Prologus Commentarii*, p. 111. The *Glossa* follows this line: ii, p. 457. Both Gross-Diaz (*Psalms Commentary*, p. 90) and Minnis (*Authorship*, p. 50) see in Gilbert's attention to song's effect a sign of increased interest in the choices David made as author, in contrast to the wordless illumination of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, not all of Gilbert's successors chose to emphasize this aspect of the Psalms, although harmonious order remained a concern, as I will show.

³² B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1982), p. 89.

order his Psalms to illuminate *sacra historia*.³³ Augustine, did, however, posit a deliberate symbolic structure for the whole book in three sets of fifty, representing a movement leading the reader from penance to justice and then to praise of God, as David himself had moved.³⁴

Explaining the organization of the Psalms mattered because their authority and veracity depended on their arrangement. Textual form was assessed in light of long-standing debates about arrangement, or *dispositio*, a principle of classical rhetorical theory: 'Arrangement is the distribution of arguments thus discovered in the proper order', wrote Cicero.³⁵ Clarity was therefore the result not only of style but of order: Cicero had urged orators to deliver a clear narrative (*aperta narratio*) by keeping to the order of events as they happened.³⁶ Quintilian, however, suggested that narrative order could be reworked as suited the situation, following the model of poets.³⁷ Order became a feature that distinguished history from poetry: Servius, for instance, in his fourth-century commentary on the *Aeneid*, noted that it was part of the poetic art to adjust natural or historical *ordo* by, for instance, beginning in the middle, or, notably, by speaking of the future as if prophetically.³⁸ Poetry relied on the artificial rearrangement of natural order.

Medieval theorists retained the distinction between 'natural' (*naturalis*) and 'artificial' (*artificialis*) order, and the trustworthiness of a text often depended on the *ordo* chosen.³⁹ Natural order appeared to endow material with a greater claim to truthfulness. For instance, Gregory the Great, in

³³ *Enarrationes*, 150.1, p. 2190. Unlike later commentators, Augustine does not give the precise reason why he is confused; implicit in his discussion, however, is that the Psalms do not follow the chronological sequence of events in David's life.

³⁴ *Enarrationes*, 150.3, pp. 2193–4.

³⁵ *De inventione* I.7.9, pp. 18–19: 'dispositio est rerum inventarum in ordinem distributio'.

³⁶ *De inventione* I.20.29, pp. 58–9.

³⁷ *Institutio oratoria* IV.2.83–4, VII.10.11.

³⁸ *Commentarius in Vergilii Aeneidos*, ed. G. Thilo (Hildesheim, 1961) I, pp. 4–5: 'this is the poetic art (*ars poetica*), that beginning from the middle (*a mediis*) we render initial things through narration and sometimes we concern ourselves with future things (*future*) as through prophecy (*per vaticinationem*): which even Horace teaches in his *Ars poetica*'. Cf. the commentary on Lucan attributed to Anselm of Laon, 'loquitur de preteritis quasi futura essent, ita enim solent loqui poete', cited by B. M. Marti, 'Literary Criticism in the Mediaeval Commentaries on Lucan', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 72 (1941), p. 248. Cf. also Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, ed. R. Kaster, ii (Cambridge, MA, 2011) V.14.11, p. 380, where Homer's non-chronological arrangement of past events ('non per ordinem . . . quae gesta sunt') is a rejection of the *stilus historicus*.

³⁹ This distinction is found in numerous medieval treatises, e.g. Conrad of Hirsau's (c.1070–1150) *Dialogus super auctores*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, in *Accessus ad auctores; Bernard d'Utrecht; Conrad d'Hirsau, Dialogus super auctores* (Leiden, 1970), p. 77. 'Artificial' order in this context is different from 'artificial mode of language' (*modus artificialis*), which in scholastic circles meant 'in accordance with the requirements of a *scientia*', i.e. of a formal

narrating a vision of St Benedict, stated that its truth was so evident that it needed to be depicted in the manner of history ('per ordinem quae fuerant gesta'), a principle William of Malmesbury echoed in his twelfth-century *vita* of St Wulfstan.⁴⁰ Thus, the writing of *historia* was generally equated with natural order, and if a historian could not produce a clearly ordered narrative, that might be due to an inability to attain a properly clear perspective on chaotic times.⁴¹ By the end of the twelfth century, the use of artificial order was generally the prerogative of poets, especially in the new *artes poeticae* by writers such as Geoffrey of Vinsauf and John of Garland who emphasized the use of artistry in reshaping nature.⁴² Yet it was not always so easy to distinguish the boundaries between historical narrative and poetic fable. Discussions of the Roman writer Lucan often centred on whether his natural *ordo* made him a poet or a historian, while Henry of Huntingdon called Homer a historian and equated poetry's and history's goals and methods of moral reform through rhetorical persuasion and delight.⁴³

Commentators often sought, therefore, to justify what appeared to be artificial order by providing a more authoritative order. For Bernardus Silvestris in the twelfth century, Vergil wrote both as a poet and a philosopher: not only did he use *integumenta* to conceal deeper philosophic truths, but those truths were actually expressed in an order that was natural,

discipline such as theology. See G. Dahan, *L'exégèse chrétienne de la Bible en occident médiéval, XIIe–XIVe siècle* (Paris, 1999), pp. 416–17.

⁴⁰ Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, ed. A. de Vogüé, *Dialogues*, SC 260 (Paris, 1979) II.35.4, p. 238; William of Malmesbury, *Vita Wulfstani*, ed. R. P. Darlington (London, 1928), p. 2: 'nichil turbavi de rerum ordine; nichil corrupti de gestorum veritate'.

⁴¹ Otto of Freising stated his commitment to the 'series historiae' which he would describe in a clear manner (*non confusa*): *Chronica* prol., p. 9; IV.4, p. 191. Gerald of Wales, on the other hand, demurred, writing that 'the reader must not expect an ordered narrative or elegance of style . . . for, . . . the individual events described appear in a jumbled sequence, thus reflecting the very disturbed (*turbate*) times themselves': *Expugnatio Hibernica*, ed. and trans. A. B. Scott and F. X. Martin (Dublin, 1978) II.prol., pp. 134–5.

⁴² Geoffrey's *Poetria nova* praises artificial order as 'fertilis' and natural as 'sterilis': ed. E. Gallo (The Hague, 1971), ll. 101–2, p. 18. Brunetto Latini's *Li livres dou tresor* does the same: ed. S. Baldwin and P. Barrette (Tempe, AZ, 2003) III.11–11a, pp. 301–3. See also D. Kelly, 'Theory of Composition in Medieval Narrative Poetry and Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova*', *Mediaeval Studies*, 31 (1969), p. 132. There were certainly exceptions to this principle: the twelfth-century *Roman d'Eneas* used *ordo naturalis*, and John of Garland acknowledged 'In poetry, we can order (*ordiri*) the subject according to either the natural (*naturale*) or the artificial (*artificiale*) beginning': *Parisiana Poetria*, ed. T. Lawler (London, 1974) III.9–12, pp. 52–3.

⁴³ On Lucan, see P. von Moos, 'Poeta und historicus im Mittelalter: Zum Mimesis-Problem am Beispiel einiger Urteile über Lucan', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 98 (1976), pp. 93–130; for Henry, see his *Historia Anglorum*, prol., pp. 3–9.

once the poem was interpreted allegorically.⁴⁴ Thus, the commentator's task was one of reordering, of providing the real, 'natural', and more truthful order, often on an allegorical level which could be 'historical' in its own way, as an indication of ordered development.⁴⁵ This, clearly, was Augustine's intention when, confronted with the confusing, apparently 'artificial' order of the Psalms, he posited a progression through the book that was based on David's own progression from penitence to holiness over the course of his life. When Scripture was the subject of comment, the issues of *ordo*, truth, and history were particularly acute, and they pointed to prophecy's uncertain position within all these competing claims. Augustine imposed a 'natural' order on the Psalms that retained a grounding in *sacra historia*, in the unfolding meaning of David's life.

Gilbert of Poitiers acknowledged the same problem—'Ordo discordat ab historia', he says—the order is discordant with history.⁴⁶ But Gilbert suggests an answer significantly different from Augustine's. Gilbert writes, 'Why [the Psalms] have been thus ordered by Ezra can be understood in some cases, yet in many the reason is unknown. The authority of the Fathers has left it thus'.⁴⁷ Cassiodorus had not mentioned Ezra in relation to the Psalms, and neither had Augustine, whose insistence on the coherent nature of the Psalms meant that David ordered and titled them himself.⁴⁸ But Isidore of Seville had mentioned Ezra as the 'author' (*auctor*) of the Old Testament because he had restored the scriptural text after it was burned and corrupted during the Babylonian Captivity.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ *Commentum super sex libros Eneidos Virgilii*, ed. J. Jones and E. Jones (Lincoln, NE, 1977), p. 3; extract translated in *MLTC*, p. 152: 'In so far as Vergil is a philosopher he describes the nature of human life. . . . In the integument (*integumentum*) he describes what the human spirit . . . does or suffers. . . . [H]e uses the natural order (*ordo naturalis*), and so makes use of both kinds of order in his narration (*narratio*)—as a poet (*poeta*) he uses the artificial order, and as a philosopher (*philosophus*), the natural order (*naturalis*)'. (Some scholars have disputed Bernardus' authorship of this commentary: *MLTC*, p. 150 n. 150.) For more on the concept of *integumentum*, a form of *fabula* containing philosophic truth, see P. Dronke, *Fabula: Explorations into the Uses of Myth in Medieval Platonism* (Leiden, 1974).

⁴⁵ For examples from a twelfth-century *Aeneid* commentary attributed to Anselm of Laon and an anonymous late fourteenth-century one, which summarize the work in historical order, see C. Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 63, 74, 313–14. John of Salisbury applied allegory to rework the *Aeneid* into a natural order of progression through stages of life: *Policraticus*, ed. C. C. J. Webb, ii (Oxford, 1909) VIII.24.

⁴⁶ *Prologus Commentarii*, p. 112.

⁴⁷ *Prologus Commentarii*, p. 112: 'Cur autem ab esdra ita sint ordinati, quamvis in quibusdam causa possit intelligi, in pluribus tamen indeterminatum. Patrum reliquit auctoritas'.

⁴⁸ *De civ.* XVII.14, p. 579; trans. H. Bettenson, *City of God* (Harmondsworth, 1984), pp. 744–5: 'it was at the inspiration of the Lord that [David] made his arrangement (*dispositio*) of diverse material, an arrangement which is not without purpose, obscure (*latebrosa*) though the purpose may be'.

⁴⁹ *Etymologiae* VI.1.3. Cf. Isidore's *De ortu et obitu patrum* 60, ed. Bruyne, in *Préfaces*, p. 34.

A Psalm prologue attributed to Isidore also claims that ten different authors had made the Psalms, which Ezra then collected and arranged in non-chronological sequence:

He brought them together into one volume and arranged them in order and number, and through the hidden mystery of a sacrament he placed some before others in order, while they seem later in time, for according to history the third Psalm is later than the fiftieth, but because of the mystery it is first in order. Thus it is with the rest, because the Holy Spirit pre-ordered them as he wished.⁵⁰

Unlike Augustine, for whom David had been the ordering principle, Isidore takes Ezra to be the locus of prophetic insight governing the order. Ezra's role here is 'prophetic' because he interprets David's visions so as to uncover the divine Word. Ezra's was a restoration project, preserving what had been, but it was also an inspired project in which the interpreter provided the spiritual meaning through a new arrangement.⁵¹

We can contrast this with an early medieval preface to the Psalms now attributed to Pseudo-Jerome, which speaks of Ezra's role in restoring Scripture, but which makes that role entirely uninspired: the current order of the Psalms reflects the order in which Ezra happened to find them while gathering up their scattered pages. Pseudo-Jerome then lists the proper historical order of the Psalms, based on David's experiences in the Book of Kings.⁵² History, for Pseudo-Jerome, is the proper prophetic order, and it is dependent on the original prophet's own experiences. The Isidorean tradition of a symbolic arrangement, however, carried the day and could be found in such sources as Remigius of Auxerre (d.909) and Hugh of St Victor's *Didascalicon*.⁵³ Gilbert notes that Ezra applied titles to

⁵⁰ ed. Bruyne, in *Prefaces*, p. 67: 'in unum volumen coegit et in ordinem numerumque disposuit, ac per occultum sacramenti mysterium aliis alios praetulit ordine, dum posteriores videantur in tempore, nam secundum historiam tertius psalmus quinquagesimo posterior est, sed propter mysterium in ordine prior est. Sic enim habentur et ceteri, quia spiritus sanctus eos praecordinavit ut voluit'.

⁵¹ This role is perhaps analogous to Augustine's notion of the inspired role of the Septuagint translators: *De civ.* XVIII.43 (and cf. Ch. 1, p. 38 n. 111). Indeed, the early twelfth-century commentator Ps-Bede says that Ezra attempted an order to help people better remember the Psalms, but the Septuagint translators put them in their current order: *In Psalmorum librum*, prol., PL 93.478, 482.

⁵² ed. Bruyne, in *Prefaces*, pp. 63–4. The preface dates from at least the ninth century. Ps-Jerome actually acknowledges that the task may have been undertaken by some other prophet. The real Jerome also wrestled with the Psalms' order but did not mention Ezra: *Commentarioli in Psalmos*, ed. P. Antin, CCSL 72 (Turnhout, 1959) Ps. 3, p. 183.

⁵³ For Remigius, see the extracts in P. A. Vaccari, 'Il genuino commento ai Salmi di Remigio di Auxerre', *Biblica*, 26 (1945), p. 66: 'ab Esdra propheta instinctu divino ita ordinati esse creduntur'. For Hugh, see *Didascalicon*, ed. T. Offergeld (Freiburg, 1997) IV.3. Cf. the comments of the twelfth-century Psalm exegete Lietbertus of St Ruf (d.1110),

the Psalms since he understood what the events were meant to signify (*figurari*).⁵⁴ Some earlier commentators had thought the titles obfuscated the meaning, but Gilbert considers them helpful, since they point the reader in the right direction, to the spiritual meaning. Historical circumstances may have given rise to David's linguistic choices, but the events of David's life do not govern the structure of the text.

A look at Psalm 107 helps to clarify Gilbert's position. Since it is composed of words from both Psalms 56 and 59, which have different, conflicting, historical senses (the former concerning the persecution of David, the latter his triumph), the psalm must point 'to another understanding'.⁵⁵ Gilbert concludes from this that all other psalm titles referring to historical events ought not to be thought of historically. Augustine had conceived something similar based on Psalm 107:

Some of the titles attached to the psalms apparently refer to events recorded in history, but we are undoubtedly right to interpret them as prophecy whenever we see that this is the perspective in which the psalms were composed.⁵⁶

History or the literal sense can, in Pauline terms (2 Cor. 3:6), kill when given too much weight. For Augustine, history was the material out of which David had woven his prophetic work, but that history was just the surface (*superficies historiae*). The prophetic selection process led the reader to see more deeply, often altering historical details to make this point explicitly, as in Psalm 113's reworking of the Exodus narrative.⁵⁷ Readers were reminded not to be too attached to the event for its own sake and to recognize that history's purpose was to teach about Christ and the Church. As a result, the surface of history pointed to something deeper, or higher—prophecy (*altitudo prophetiae*).⁵⁸ From the prophetic perspective, one sees beneath the surface the real pattern, that of sacred history.

Commentarius in lxxv Davidis psalmos (PL 21.644–5), who states that the arrangement was 'perhaps' (*fortassis*) the work of the Spirit.

⁵⁴ *In librum Psalmorum*, MS Auct. D.2.1, fol. 9r.

⁵⁵ *In librum Psalmorum*, MS Auct. D.2.1, fol. 161v: 'ad alium intellectum'.

⁵⁶ *Enarrationes*, 107.2, p. 1584; trans. M. Boulding, *Expositions of the Psalms*, The Works of St Augustine 3/15–20, v (Hyde Park, NY, 2000–4), p. 240: 'Admonemur . . . eos titulos qui tanquam de historia positi sunt, rectissime fieri ut secundum prophetiam intelligamus, secundum quod videmus psalmos esse conscriptos'.

⁵⁷ *Enarrationes*, 113(I).1, p. 1635; trans., v, p. 305: 'The Spirit did not in the psalm describe deeds exactly as we learn of their happening historically (*gesta sunt*). He introduced some differences, lest we should imagine that the psalm was simply recounting deeds over and done with (*transacta*) rather than foretelling the future (*ventura praedicere*)'.

⁵⁸ *Enarrationes*, 107.2, p. 1584. Cf. Gregory the Great's contrast of *superficies historiae* with profound (*profunda*) prophecy (and allegorical or mystical understanding): *Moralia* XVIII.39.60; XX.3.8.

Augustine ultimately resisted detaching prophecy from history, even with the Psalms. He insisted that commentators should be aware of the rootedness of the Psalms in the context of David's actual historical experience: to lose sight of this by selecting and explaining verses from different sections would be to create a *cento* (a rearrangement of other poets' verses to create a new poem) without regard for that historical reality.⁵⁹ Augustine accepted that prophetic writings had their own rules and their own use of rhetorical principles.⁶⁰ At the same time, he attempted to link David's apparent use of this artificial order—despite its kinship with poetry—to historiography, that is, to prophetic history. Thus, for Augustine, a prophet manipulates tenses because he sees all times with the same certainty as one might normally view the past: 'Now take the case of a prophet: to him or her a future event is as certain as a past event is to you and me'.⁶¹ Prophetic knowledge reweave the natural order of time, but only in order to reveal the true—sacred—historical order.

Gilbert shows less concern for that historical experience as the basis of the prophetic text. He follows Augustine in urging the reader to move beyond the surface of ordinary history (*superficies historiae*) to reach the *altitudo prophetiae*, but he does not ground that prophetic meaning in David's historical experience.⁶² When he echoes Augustine's explanation of the movement of the Psalms from penitence to praise, he does not connect it to the movement of David's own life.⁶³ Gilbert instead gives Ezra the credit for interpreting, arranging, and commenting on David's prophetic words in order to bring out the *ratio* underlying the chaos of surface history. It is not historical events per se, nor even the historical narration of them in the scriptural Book of Kings, but rather the prophetic *interpretation* and rearrangement of them into non-historical revelations, that gives them their elevated standing.⁶⁴ Ezra shows that even the greatest and clearest of prophets needs an inspired exegete's proper arrangement. Thus, Gilbert's elevation of the Psalms as the basis for scholastic discussion

⁵⁹ *De civ.* XVII.15, pp. 579–80. ⁶⁰ *De doct.* II.37.55, p. 118.

⁶¹ *Enarrationes*, 43.8, p. 485; trans., ii, p. 269: 'Da prophetam cui tam certum sit futurum quam tibi praeteritum'. Cf. Tyconius' sixth rule of scriptural interpretation discussed in *De doct.* III.36. On the transposition of tenses as a recognized feature of poetry, see p. 57 n. 38.

⁶² *In librum Psalmorum*, MS Auct. D.2.1, fol. 161v.

⁶³ *Prologus Commentarii*, p. 111.

⁶⁴ Other prophetic visions, such as Isaiah's, were more closely linked to historical narrative, as Isidore makes clear: 'Among the prophets Isaiah is certainly most revered because he narrated all the deeds of Christ in order and most fully' ('per ordinem enarravit [*sic*] et plenissime'), *Ysaye testimonia de Christo domino*, PL Supplementum 4.1822; trans. R. L. Wilken, in *Isaiah: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2007), p. 9.

of prophecy and his emphasis on their artificial arrangement promoted a notion of inspired writing that was *not* rooted in a narrative of historical unfolding.

II. PETER LOMBARD'S PSALM COMMENTARY

Peter Lombard (c.1095–1160) continued Gilbert of Poitiers's reconsideration of the nature of sacred texts by consolidating many of Gilbert's emphases. Begun shortly after Gilbert's commentary, and influenced strongly by it, Peter's Psalm commentary (finished 1158) became 'the scholastic commentary of choice' within a generation, remaining the standard for nearly two hundred years.⁶⁵ Thus, it is no understatement to claim that his prefatory remarks strongly influenced the subsequent scholastic opinion that the Psalms—the prophetic text most idiosyncratic in its structure, least obviously an inspired vision of history, and apparently most encyclopaedic in its theological content—was the text in which to truly understand prophecy.

One of Peter Lombard's most significant contributions is his emphasis on distinctions between different prophets, the articulation of different levels of prophecy along a continuum of inspiration. Peter follows Gilbert in promoting David's supreme standing among prophets (*eximius prophetarum*), and for the same reasons: David's uniquely inward and clear prophecy based on 'the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit'.⁶⁶ Like Gilbert, Peter reworks Augustine's typology of visions in order to assign

⁶⁵ M. Colish, 'Psalterium Scholasticorum: Peter Lombard and the Emergence of Scholastic Psalms Exegesis', *Speculum*, 67 (1992), p. 532; Gross-Diaz, *Psalms Commentary*, p. 31. A first version of Peter's work was composed 1139–41 and then revised 1155–8. The text, *Commentarium in Psalmos Davidicos*, is in PL 191.55–1296. I have also consulted Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D.2.8 since the PL contains later additions. The preface is translated in *MLTC*, pp. 105–12. Martin Morard posits 1160 as the date by which Lombard's commentary became the standard until Nicholas of Lyra's replaced it in the early fourteenth century: M. Morard, 'Entre mode et tradition: Les commentaires des Psaumes de 1160 à 1350', in G. Cremascoli and F. Santi (eds), *La Bibbia del XIII secolo* (Tavarnuzze, 2004), p. 325. Peter's influence led to widespread use of his preface, which was even inserted at the beginning of non-scholastic commentaries such as that of the mid-twelfth-century psalter made for Canterbury's cathedral: *The Canterbury Psalter*, ed. M. R. James (London, 1935), fols 5r–5v.

⁶⁶ *In Psalmos*, praef., col. 55; trans., p. 105: 'For other prophets gave their prophecies through the medium of images and words with a veiled meaning, namely through dreams and visions, words and deeds, but David uttered his prophecies by the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, without any external aid' ('Alii namque prophetae per quosdam rerum imagines atque verborum integumenta, scilicet per somnia ac visiones, facta ac dicta prophetarunt. David autem solius spiritus sancti instinctu sine omni exteriori adminiculo, suam edidit prophetiam').

intellectual vision only to the best prophets, that is, to those with unmediated comprehension and clear utterance:

[David's prophecy] surpass[es] others in clarity of expression. For David, the most excellent among the prophets, has so clearly revealed to us things about Christ's passion and resurrection, His begetting by the Eternal Being, and other mysteries, things which other prophets referred to obscurely and through enigmas, that he seems to be evangelizing rather than prophesying.⁶⁷

The best prophecy has the lucidity and certainty of first-hand historical accounts, making the activities of prediction and writing about the past one and the same. Though Peter's source for part of this comment is Jerome,⁶⁸ his emphasis is not on David's narrative abilities or predictions of future events, but rather the intellectual nature of his prophecy and its resemblance to inner wisdom.

Even more so than in Gilbert's preface, Peter emphasizes that David's understanding operates without external aids. Once again, the word 'soliloquy' provides the occasion:

the book is called a soliloquy, as being the utterance of the Holy Spirit alone. For, although in the titles and in certain psalms David referred to various historical events, he did not learn anything from them, but realized that that which he already knew through the Holy Spirit is represented figuratively in them.⁶⁹

Peter suggests not only a withdrawal from the usual means of inspiration, such as visionary images or dreams, but also a withdrawal from history. This passage might be read as a standard emphasis on the importance of the spiritual sense over the letter, but Peter's insistence that David learned *nothing* from his engagement with time is something new, not found even in Gilbert's commentary. David already saw the deeper significance of events because he saw the doctrines which would be derived from those events.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *In Psalmos*, praef., col. 57; trans., p. 107 (with alterations): 'inter alias dictorum excellit apertione. Ea quippe quae alii prophetae obscure et quasi per aenigmata dixerunt de passione et resurrectione Christi, et aeterna genitura et de caeteris mysteriis. David prophetarum excellentissimus ita evidentissime aperuit, ut magis videatur evangelizare quam prophetare'.

⁶⁸ Peter here changes Jerome's 'historiam texere' to 'evangelizare', but elsewhere (on Ps. 21) he links 'history' and 'gospel': *In Psalmos*, col. 226. Cf. p. 55 n. 26.

⁶⁹ *In Psalmos*, praef., col. 58; trans., p. 109: 'soliloquium dicitur, quasi solius Spiritus sancti eloquium; licet enim et in titulis et in psalmis quibusdam alludat diversis historiis, tamen ex eis nil didicit, sed in eis quod per Spiritum sanctum ante cognoverat, figurari intellexit'.

⁷⁰ Kuczynski's claim (*Prophetic Song*, p. xx) that 'medieval writers insist that the Psalter only makes...sense when grounded in the facts of Davidic history' therefore needs

Peter thus removes David from the sully of history, in effect turning away from Hugh's model of the ark, the interweaving of sacred and secular history to form *prophetica historia*. From the heights of inspiration, according to Peter, David's text contains all of theology ('consummatio . . . totius theologiae paginae').⁷¹ Whatever one finds in the rest of Scripture can be found in the Psalms. David produces a theology which is based not on a *ratio* seen within an unfolding temporal narrative, but rather on doctrinal truth. Peter does recognize, however, that he must account for time and history somehow: the Psalms, he says, are encyclopaedic not only in breadth of knowledge but in their ability to encompass time. He proposes that the book's 150 distinct psalms, divided into two groups of seventy and eighty, represent the seven ages of man and the eight ages of the world.⁷² If the Psalms do not seem to reflect David's history, their movement at least symbolizes the history of the world.

It would seem, then, that Peter would have a ready-made explanation for the mysterious order and structure of the Psalms. Like Gilbert, he knows they do not accord with history ('a serie historiae discordant'), and he could therefore have claimed that David had another governing principle in mind.⁷³ Instead, Peter follows Gilbert and gives responsibility for that organizing principle to Ezra:

For the prophet Ezra, who, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, recreated the Psalter and the whole Bible after it had been burnt by the Babylonians, gave the psalms this order through the same inspiration as the Holy Spirit, and added titles which are, so to speak, keys to the psalms.⁷⁴

Ezra's prophetically inspired task was to rearrange the Psalms in a better order than chronology.⁷⁵

qualification. Kuczynski assumes Augustine's influence was greater than it was. Peter does say that prophecy can be either foreknowledge (*praescientia*) or warning (*comminatio*) (*In Psalmos*, praef., col. 58), but the implication remains that David's real significance is his doctrinal clarity.

⁷¹ *In Psalmos*, praef., col. 57. Peter explicitly mentions, inter alia, concepts of sin and repentance.

⁷² *In Psalmos*, praef., col. 56–7. The *Glossa* makes this connection as well: ii, p. 456.

⁷³ *In Psalmos*, praef., col. 59.

⁷⁴ *In Psalmos*, praef., col. 59; trans., p. 111: 'Esdras namque propheta, qui Psalterium et totam bibliothecam a Babyloniis combustam instinctu Spiritus sancti reformavit, eodem Spiritu revelante, psalmos ita disposuit, eisdem et titulos apposuit, qui sunt quasi claves psalmorum'.

⁷⁵ Peter also follows Gilbert and contrasts the surface of history (*superficies historiae*) with the depth of prophecy (*altitudo prophetiae*): *In Psalmos*, Ps. 107, col. 983. Gilbert and Peter's interest in preserving Ezra's role fits with a general twelfth-century concern for the restoration of lost knowledge. For this concern, see G. Constable, 'Renewal and Reform in Religious Life: Concepts and Realities', in *RRTC*, pp. 37–67.

As with Gilbert, Peter's choice of the Psalms as the highest model of prophecy helped to shift the emphasis away from prophecy's ties to historical narrative. The principles evident in both Gilbert's and Peter's prologues were repeated in numerous Psalm commentaries over the next two centuries. These successors affirmed David's supremacy as prophet; his imageless, intellectual vision; and the excellence of his doctrinal teaching.⁷⁶ These exegetes also paid close attention to the role of artificial order in the Psalms, maintaining the impetus highlighted by Ezra's centrality in Gilbert's and Peter's work. To show some of the ways in which twelfth-century scholastic principles of prophecy were transmitted, I turn now to look at *ordo* in the exegesis of Hugh of St Cher (1200–63), Thomas Aquinas (c.1225–1274), and Nicholas Trevet (c.1258–c.1334), three of the most important Dominican exegetes of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.⁷⁷

III. ORDER AND HISTORY IN DOMINICAN EXEGESIS

Though secular masters of the twelfth century continued to comment on the Psalms, the success of Peter Lombard's commentary essentially brought the field to a halt for a century, until the Dominicans began to reassess Psalm exegesis, though without replacing Peter's work.⁷⁸ For the second half of the thirteenth century, Hugh of St Cher's *Postilla super totam bibliam* became a standard exegetical reference, especially within the Order of Preachers. One of the first friars working at the new Dominican

⁷⁶ These principles are found, for instance, in the prologues of secular masters Peter the Chanter (d.1197), Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodl. 772; and Peter of Poitiers (late 12th c.), Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 499; of the canon Alexander Neckham (d.1217), Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 284; and of Ps-Albert the Great (c.1240s), Borgnet 15–17, to which Morard gives a Parisian provenance: 'Commentaires des Psaumes', p. 351.

⁷⁷ Scholars know of fifteen Dominican Psalm commentaries written between 1236 and 1315, with most of those lost or in fragments: Morard, 'Commentaires des Psaumes', pp. 332–3, 350–1. According to the *Unguentarius* of William of Werda, OP, an early fourteenth-century compilation for preachers made from commentary extracts, the other Dominican exegetical luminaries of the thirteenth century were Hugh of St Cher, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and Nicholas Gorran: Oxford, Magdalen College, MS 167. Those four Dominicans are the primary *moderni* William cites. No Psalm commentary of Albert's survives (Morard, 'Commentaires des Psaumes', p. 342), while Gorran's prologue follows Aquinas's so closely it provides no additional insights.

⁷⁸ Morard, 'Commentaires des Psaumes', pp. 347–8. Morard does not explain why Dominicans took greater interest in Psalm exegesis than other orders. His list of commentaries (pp. 350–2) gives but eight Franciscan ones for the period 1236–1315. Only with Nicholas of Lyra's *postilla* (1322–36) did a Franciscan commentary become the standard.

house in Paris, Hugh and his associates undertook to establish a complete scriptural commentary, a 'massive updating of the *Glossa Ordinaria*', which included glosses from *moderni* such as Hugh of St Victor and Bernard of Clairvaux.⁷⁹ The *Postilla*'s Psalm commentary (1230s) emerged out of this larger task. Yet, despite the success of Hugh of St Cher's other exegetical endeavours, when it came to the Psalms, Peter Lombard's work continued to be recopied and referred to far more than Hugh's.⁸⁰ Thomas Aquinas, in fact, returned to Peter's work rather than to Hugh's when he produced his own commentary (towards the end of his life in 1272), sparking what Martin Morard has called a second wave of commentary, which included Peter John Olivi's (1270s), Nicholas Gorran's (1280), and Nicholas Trevet's (c.1315).⁸¹

Hugh perpetuates some of Peter Lombard's ideas, stating, for instance, that David is the greatest prophet (*eximius prophetarum*), but Hugh's commentary is less focused on the doctrinal significance of the Psalms than on their role as a guide for contemplatives. He insists that the Psalms speak less to theologians than to those in religious orders who are moved 'through contemplation' (*contemplatio*).⁸² Furthermore, while Hugh does posit a traditional tripartite structure and a spiritual movement from penitence to justice to praise, there is no discussion of Ezra's role in facilitating artificial order, only a statement that he put titles on the Psalms as keys to their understanding.⁸³ There are indications elsewhere (in Hugh's Isaiah commentary) that he or someone working under him *has* thought about the structure of prophecy, for he says of Isaiah, 'He does not write the history in an orderly (*ordinate*) way or by sequence, but rather by leaping around according to the revelation of the Spirit'.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, in this early Dominican attempt at Psalm exegesis, there is little to draw on regarding prophecy, history, and artificial order.

That changes when considering the next major Dominican Psalm exegete, Thomas Aquinas, who turned back past Hugh all the way to

⁷⁹ L. Smith, 'Hugh of St Cher and Medieval Collaboration,' in F. Harkins (ed.), *Transforming Relations: Essays on Jews and Christians throughout History* (Notre Dame, IN, 2010), p. 251. See also Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, pp. 270–4, who says Hugh's postills were 'found on the shelves of any self-respecting library in the later Middle Ages'. Though Hugh's work was most likely collaborative, Smith argues ('Hugh of St Cher', pp. 253–6) that it still makes sense to call Hugh the author of the *Postilla*, since it was based to a large degree on his lectures and he had oversight of the project.

⁸⁰ Morard, 'Commentaires des Psaumes', p. 324.

⁸¹ 'Commentaires des Psaumes', p. 348.

⁸² *Postilla super totam bibliam*, ii (Basel, 1498–1502), fol. a2v.

⁸³ *Postilla*, ii, fol. a4v.

⁸⁴ *Postilla*, iv, fol. a2r: 'Non enim ordinate vel serio notat historiam, sed saltando secundum spiritus revelationem'.

Peter Lombard and sought to rearticulate the importance of order and structure in the Psalms. Delivered at the Dominican *studium* at Naples, Aquinas's *Postilla super Psalmos* is one of his last works and treats the first fifty-four Psalms.⁸⁵ Like Peter Lombard, Aquinas believed the Psalms contained all theology (*tota theologia*) within them, making them a crucial focus of study.⁸⁶ Aquinas suggests, furthermore, that the Psalms are endowed with meaning, not only through the use of metaphors and *figurae* pointing towards the spiritual senses, but also, and primarily, he says, through the rearranging of material. The Psalms are based on David's historical experiences, but they have been, with insight and inspiration, reordered. It is precisely this reordering which reveals that they 'signify beyond history', indicating the fullness of their prophetic meaning.⁸⁷ For Augustine, the Psalms had ultimately been prophetic because of their figurative and predictive language, the *altitudo prophetiae* rather than the *superficies historiae*. But, expanding on Gilbert and Peter's efforts, Aquinas attends to the artificial order of the text itself as a sign that it is not mere history, but rather the fruit of inspiration. Aquinas does not take an explicit stance on Ezra's role in all of this—he uses a passive participle to describe the reordering—but it does very much matter to him that the Psalms were structured prophetically, since it is the text's *order* which reveals its spiritual significance.⁸⁸

What Aquinas means here by 'signification beyond history' is the tropological (moral) sense: the Psalms' traditional structure of groups of fifty according to the spiritual states of penitence, justice, and praise.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Psalms 1–51 are in Parma 14, while Psalms 52–4 were edited by P.-A. Uccelli: *In tres psalmos David* (Rome, 1880), pp. 241–54. For a discussion of the commentary in the context of Aquinas's stay in Naples, see J.-P. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. R. Royal, i (Washington, DC, 1996), pp. 247–66. Thomas Ryan calls it 'one of the least studied' of Aquinas's exegetical works: *Thomas Aquinas as Reader of the Psalms* (Notre Dame, IN, 2000), p. 2. Despite Aquinas's prominence, Peter Lombard remained more widely read even at the time: there are only four extant manuscripts of Aquinas's commentary, compared to several hundred of Peter's: see *Aquinas as Reader*, p. 6; and L.-J. Bataillon, 'La diffusione manoscritta e stampata dei commenti biblici di San Tommaso d'Aquino', *Angelicum*, 71 (1994), p. 589. Aquinas's commentary was definitely studied by Dominicans, though, including by Trevet: J. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino* (Oxford, 1975), p. 302.

⁸⁶ *Super Psalmos*, prolog., p. 148. Aquinas contrasts the Psalms with other books of Scripture, which deal only with certain parts of theology.

⁸⁷ *Super Psalmos*, prolog., p. 150: 'psalmi quidam tangunt historias, sed non sunt ordinati secundum ordinem historiae . . . unde aliquid aliud significant praeter historiam tantum'.

⁸⁸ This particular point has not been given as much notice as it should, since both Minnis (*Authorship*, pp. 87–8) and Ryan (*Aquinas as Reader*, p. 16) focus on the notion of surplus, i.e. that the text is recognizably prophetic when its language and content surpass what historical context would suggest.

⁸⁹ *Super Psalmos*, prolog., p. 150.

David's historical experiences have been rearranged to create a particular progression of songs that will more effectively teach the path to salvation through moral reform. David's vision was of the meaning of Christ's Incarnation, not primarily so as to foretell this event, but so as to show people how to praise God (with song) for this event and thus move them to seek forgiveness.⁹⁰

The implications of this developing emphasis on rearrangement as a crucial feature of the Psalms can be seen more clearly by extending our scope to Nicholas Trevet's early fourteenth-century Psalm commentary.⁹¹ Having studied in Paris and been appointed Dominican regent master in Oxford in 1314, Trevet was one of the most esteemed scriptural exegetes within the Dominican order: his commentaries on Genesis and Exodus, for instance, were approved by the general chapter held at Strasbourg in 1307.⁹² His Psalm commentary would soon be surpassed by the exceedingly popular *postilla* of Nicholas of Lyra (c.1326) and, as a result, it only survives in five manuscripts. Nonetheless, Trevet's talents accorded well with Dominican attempts at the beginning of the fourteenth century to shore up their scriptural teaching to complement the growth of speculative theology. Such efforts are evident in the 1308 Dominican general chapter at Padua, which ordered each province to establish a house dedicated to the teaching of Scripture.⁹³ Unlike in Hugh of St Cher's time, there was a decidedly greater emphasis on exposition of the literal sense: Trevet's provincial asked for a literal exposition (*expositio literalis*), so as to more clearly reveal the prophetic and spiritual meaning of the text.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ e.g. in Aquinas's discussion of Ps. 43: *Super Psalmos*, p. 514.

⁹¹ I have consulted the partial edition by B. P. Shields, 'A Critical Edition of Selections from Nicholas Trivet's *Commentarius literalis in Psalterium*' (Rutgers University, PhD dissertation, 1970), as well as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 738 and—in place of damaged sections of that manuscript—Hereford, Hereford Cathedral, MS O.4.xi. To avoid confusion, I give the title as '*In Psalterium*' only when citing from the edition, referring to the manuscripts separately.

⁹² R. J. Dean, 'Cultural Relations in the Middle Ages: Nicholas Trevet and Nicholas of Prato', *Studies in Philology*, 45 (1948), p. 548.

⁹³ *Acta capitulorum generalium Ordinis Praedicatorum*, ed. B. M. Reichert, ii (Rome, 1898), in *MOPH* 4, p. 34. On these developments in Dominican education, see M. M. Mulchahey, '*First the Bow is Bent in Study*—': *Dominican Education before 1350* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 340–1.

⁹⁴ *In Psalterium*, Ep. Prohemialis, p. 59. Trevet used Jerome's *Hebraicum* version, and he believed that this type of literal commentary had never been done before, claiming that *doctores* of earlier times had either neglected or perfunctorily touched upon the literal sense. Yet there were predecessors interested in the same approach, such as Andrew of St Victor and Herbert of Bosham: see E. De Visscher, '“Closer to the Hebrew”: Herbert of Bosham's Interpretation of Literal Exegesis', in I. van 't Spijker (ed.), *The Multiple Meaning of Scripture: The Role of Exegesis in Early-Christian and Medieval Culture* (Leiden, 2009), pp. 249–72.

Trevet's commentary reveals the continued importance of structural principles. He only briefly acknowledges Ezra's role in bringing the Psalms together, but that role is an important one. Instead of simply noting Ezra's entitling of the Psalms, Trevet states that Ezra put the Psalms into one book since they were done by different authors.⁹⁵ Unlike his predecessors, who insisted on David's sole authorship, Trevet makes Ezra the unifying authority.⁹⁶ Ezra is not mentioned again, but prophetic reordering clearly has great significance for Trevet, especially because of its affinities to poetry and music. Earlier exegetes had argued that the Psalms were a unique form of prophecy because of the depths of David's Christological understanding, but Trevet insists instead that they are unique because of their affinities to music:

Although the prophets before David brought forth many and diverse songs for the praise of God, we have nonetheless not read that they were based on the modulations of musical instruments.⁹⁷

This emphasis on music leads Trevet to make a further analogy: the formal cause of the Psalms lies in the ordering of parts ('in ordine partium'), which consist not of the traditional three sections of fifty but rather of fifteen sets of ten, with each decade like the string on a psaltery.⁹⁸ He explains,

Just as in making melody on the strings of a psaltery, the strings are not touched according to their natural order but selectively and in interspersed fashion, now here, now there, so likewise psalms to God's praise are not placed in the Psalter according to the continuous order of history but selectively, by interspersing what deals with later events, or alternatively according to what the devotion of the Psalmist rose to in the praise of God.⁹⁹

The Psalms retain a unity not through the order of history but rather through the order of praise, weaving times together to create harmonious music.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ MS O.4.xi, fol. 3: 'psalmi fuerunt diversorum auctorum, sed ab Ezra scriba in unum librum et in unum volumen redacti sunt'.

⁹⁶ Minnis, *Authorship*, pp. 46, 55, points out that 'auctoritas entails unity', something which commentators had to bestow on works that appeared to have no sequence or guiding principle, whether secular (Ovid's *Heroides*) or sacred (the Psalms).

⁹⁷ *In Psalterium*, praef., p. 67: 'Cum prophete ante David multa et diversa ad laudem Dei ediderint cantica, non tamen legimus quod ad modulationes instrumentorum musicorum fuerint'. Trevet's love of music is obvious from his detailed discussion of instruments in the gloss on Ps. 150, MS Bodl. 738, fol. 249v–50r.

⁹⁸ *In Psalterium*, praef., p. 71.

⁹⁹ *In Psalterium*, praef., p. 71; trans., Minnis, *Authorship*, p. 152 (with alterations): 'Sicut autem in cordis psalterii ad faciendam melodiam, non tanguntur corde secundum ordinem suum valorem, sed carptim et interpolate—nunc hic, nunc illic—sic ad Dei laudem in Psalterio non ponuntur Psalmi secundum ordinem continuum historie, sed carptim interponendo que postea contigerunt, nunc econtro secundum quod devotio psallentis insurgebat in Dei laudem'.

¹⁰⁰ The notion of praise providing unity was not new, but Trevet's reasons were. Jerome said of the Psalms, 'The order of history (*ordo historiae*) need not be preserved where one

And Trevet goes further, applying the principles of poetry: like poets, writers of songs use artificial rather than natural or historical order.¹⁰¹ He points out that Vergil started the *Aeneid* in the middle of the story ('a medio historie'), before returning to the beginning and proceeding from there.¹⁰² The historical, by being rearranged, retold, and retought in artificial order, becomes musical. Prophetic structuring and arranging of material provide the literary qualities of Scripture that give it its harmony, its unity, and its spiritual effectiveness.

Aquinas, too, had noted a connection between the Psalms, music, and poetry. His commentary on Psalm 4, for instance, begins with a discussion of Hebrew musical practice and the effect metre has on the text of a poem.¹⁰³ He shows awareness of the affective power of poetry and song: musical harmonies can change a person's emotional state and arouse the soul to God.¹⁰⁴ But this acknowledgement was, for the purposes of Aquinas's readers, purely theoretical. Hebrew metre could not be experienced through Latin translation.¹⁰⁵ If the Psalms had an impact as part of the liturgy or monastic office, this was not due to their original metrical composition. The real harmony and beauty of the Psalms, for Aquinas, was due to their ability to teach the path to God and to allow a reader to enter upon that path through close identification with the Psalmist.¹⁰⁶ Teaching this path was how the Psalms healed and consoled.¹⁰⁷

speaks of the praises of God' ('de laudibus Dei'), *In Amos prophetam*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 76 (Turnhout, 1969), p. 237. The concept was applied to secular poetry as well, e.g., by Bernardus Silvestris on the *Aeneid*, (*Super Eneidos*, p. 11): 'ubi de laude Dei agitur non est curandus ordo historie'. Jerome emphasizes pedagogy, saying the re-arrangement teaches (*docere*) us about praise (*In Amos*, p. 237), while Trevet emphasizes the persuasion, harmonious delight, and healing that comes from musicality.

¹⁰¹ *In Psalterium*, praef., p. 71: 'Et [ordo artificialis] est proprius modus eorum qui scribunt carmina, quod non secundum ordinem historie sed carptim scribant'.

¹⁰² *In Psalterium*, praef., p. 71.

¹⁰³ *Super Psalmos*, Ps. 4.1, pp. 157–8.

¹⁰⁴ *Super Psalmos*, Ps. 32.2, p. 260. Aquinas cites the example of Pythagoras calming a frenzied youth, which Boethius had used in *De institutione musica*, ed. G. Friedlein (Leipzig, 1867) I.1. Aquinas shows more awareness of music than Peter Lombard: Peter had abandoned Gilbert's links to music and to the affective power of David's creation as a reason for the Psalms' standing within the Church: *In Psalmos*, col. 55.

¹⁰⁵ There was, in fact, no metre there in the first place, despite claims going back to the patristic period: J. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History* (Baltimore, MD, 1998), pp. 140ff.

¹⁰⁶ *Super Psalmos*, opif., p. 148. Aquinas would not lament, as Dante did, the removal of poetic metre—and thus all sweetness and harmony ('dolcezza di musica e armonia')—from the Psalms through their translation from Hebrew: *Convivio*, ed. P. Cudini (Milan, 1980) I.7, p. 28. The Psalms' veracity remained intact (as Dante acknowledged), and for Aquinas that was what mattered: F. Santi, 'L'esegesi biblica di Tommaso d'Aquino nel contesto dell'esegesi biblica medievale', *Angelicum*, 71 (1994), p. 521.

¹⁰⁷ The Psalms' consolatory function was a commonplace, e.g. in Augustine, *Enarrationes*, 26(II).1; and in the *Glossa* on Ps. 1 (drawing from Jerome), ii, p. 458.

Trevet's use of harmony, therefore, is a clear reintroduction of the musical link between poetry and prophecy, but in new terms. Rather than speaking of the power of a lost metre or, as some of his predecessors had, the harmonious beauty of prophetic prefiguration, Trevet declares the weaving of events into a new structure to be the key feature of the harmony experienced by the reader. This harmony gives the Psalms the healing power of music.¹⁰⁸ What we are left with, therefore, as we move from the twelfth century through the thirteenth, is a transformation of Augustine's model of *prophetica historia*. For Augustine, David's role was to show how to find deeper meaning within the historical narrative of Scripture, and in particular, how to escape the mutability of things by narrating the consoling harmonies of sacred history: '[David] used [music] in the service of his God, by giving a mystical prefiguration of a matter of high importance'.¹⁰⁹ For Trevet, it is still the insightful arrangement of material that reveals the prophet's gift. But there is less emphasis on the prophet as sacred historian arranging a veiled narrative with hidden mysteries—Trevet is not concerned with veils or their removal. The *Aeneid*, to which Trevet compares the Psalms, was indeed originally a history, but it has been rearranged, not to prefigure but to give delight as in a song of praise. Those focused on the Davidic model of prophecy increasingly saw the gift of prophetic ordering to be indicative of the non-historical, creative powers of a sacred poet.¹¹⁰

IV. PROPHECY AND THE WORK OF THEOLOGAINS: PRINCIPLES OF ORDER AND INTELLECTUAL VISION

I have concentrated thus far in this chapter on exploring how Psalm commentaries reveal a shift in the way certain medieval theologians identified the elements that made a text sacred or inspired, with a

¹⁰⁸ For this healing power, Trevet refers to Boethius' *De musica* and then draws on the examples of Pythagoras and of David healing Saul by driving out a demon with his lyre (3 Kgs 16:23).

¹⁰⁹ *De civ.* XVII.14, p. 578; trans., p. 744: 'eaque Deo suo... mystica rei magnae figuratone servierit.'

¹¹⁰ Contrast this with the Franciscan Bonaventure's emphasis that Scripture reveals the universe to be a beautiful, ordered song (*pulcherrimum carmen ordinatum*) precisely by showing the course of history running in order (*ordinatissimus decursus*) from beginning to end ('a principio usque ad finem'): *Breviloquium*, ed. Collegium S. Bonaventurae, *Opera theologica selecta* 5 (Quaracchi, 1954), prol.2.4, p. 8. Cf. Augustine, Ep. 138, 1.5.

foundation in historical narrative becoming less definitive. In the next two sections, I show how scholastic views of sacred texts and of the prophecy underlying them were connected to theologians' understanding of their own professional and academic activities.¹¹¹ Theologians increasingly saw affinities between themselves and prophets, and 'prophetic' became an important label—and source of authority—for theologians' work as exegetes, speculative thinkers, and teachers. In describing these theological activities as 'prophetic', I am not arguing that theologians claimed to receive and speak the divine word as Ezekiel or Isaiah did. Instead, theologians gave new force to an old principle. That principle, based on 1 Corinthians, Cassiodorus, and Gregory, was the belief that the interpretation and exegesis of Scripture could be a kind of 'prophecy' or *spiritus intelligentiae*, a belief held firmly by twelfth-century theologians, as we have already seen.¹¹² This principle would allow theologians to conceive of their ordinary professional tasks as modest forms of inspiration informing the fulfilment of their prophetic function within the Church.

By the mid-twelfth century, the lineaments of an official body of teachers invested with a licence to teach (*licentia docendi*) were growing clearer.¹¹³ As Chenu notes, such an authorized group was unprecedented, insofar as it was composed of professionals who were not juridically part of the hierarchy but who had nonetheless been given the authority to explain the truths of the faith, and to do so by using 'the services of natural reason . . . in order to bring into being an organized science, a scholastic theology'.¹¹⁴ In creating this science, they became a source of authority themselves.

Given the significance of *ordo* in early scholastic Psalm commentaries, it is important to recognize that theological concern with arrangement was part of a wider emphasis on order and structure, which scholars have long considered one of the major intellectual and cultural shifts that begins in the twelfth century.¹¹⁵ Twelfth-century learning was characterized by

¹¹¹ For a treatment of the self-awareness of scriptural exegetes with regard to politics, see Philippe Buc's *L'ambiguïté du Livre: Prince, pouvoir, et peuple dans les commentaires de la Bible au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1994).

¹¹² See Ch. 1, pp. 36–7, 40.

¹¹³ S. Ferruolo, *The Origins of the University* (Stanford, CA, 1985), p. 189.

¹¹⁴ M.-D. Chenu, *Toward Understanding St Thomas*, trans. A. M. Landry and D. Hughes (Chicago, 1964), p. 20. Chenu cites as indicative Aquinas's dictum (taken from Aristotle): 'sapientis est ordinare', 'it belongs to the wise man to order': *SCG* I.1; trans. A. C. Pegis, i (Garden City, NY, 1955), p. 59.

¹¹⁵ See, inter alia, Chenu, *Understanding St Thomas*, ch. 11; Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (London, 1993), ch. 3; and M. B. Parkes, who focuses on the shift from monastic to scholastic *lectio* and emphasizes the twelfth century's predominant interest in 'the ordering of studies': 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the

'the effort to gather, organize, and harmonize the legacy of the Christian past', while the thirteenth century then attempted to analyse the results of that effort.¹¹⁶ There are clearly many reasons for this increased attention to order, including, at the most straightforward level, the development of theology as an academic and pedagogic discipline and the growing interest in preaching.¹¹⁷ The adoption of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* as the fundamental teaching text, alongside the Bible, for teaching theology helped make the task of theology, particularly in relation to Scripture, one of ordering, interpreting and commenting.¹¹⁸ Alexander of Hales's (d.1245) *Summa theologia* summarizes well the new attitude towards this task (with the *summa* genre itself another sign of these developments): 'the apprehension of truth according to human reason is explained through divisions, definitions, and reasoning'.¹¹⁹ This was the direction theology moved in from the twelfth century onward.¹²⁰

This focus on order led commentators to see new structures in the texts they examined, including sacred texts. One such structure, which gained in importance by the thirteenth century, was the compilation (*compilatio*), in which the compiler added no new materials, but rather 'imposed... a new *ordinatio* on the materials extracted from others'.¹²¹ As exegetes attended more to the different ways texts could be created and the different ways authorities could be used, scriptural books such as Jeremiah and Wisdom began to be seen as compilations.¹²² The connections with Gilbert of Poitiers's and Peter Lombard's descriptions of Ezra's role in

Development of the Book', in J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (eds), *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays presented to Richard William Hunt* (Oxford, 1976), p. 117.

¹¹⁶ R. H. Rouse and M. A. Rouse, 'Statim invenire: Schools, Preachers, and New Attitudes to the Page', in *RRTC*, p. 201. They cite as twelfth-century examples the *Glossa*, Gratian's *Decretum*, and Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, around all of which commentaries and concordances grew up in the following century.

¹¹⁷ On theological developments, see p. 52; on preaching, see Parkes, 'Ordinatio', p. 137, who notes that Dominicans in particular needed good working tools and searchable texts: 'All the scholarly activity in the convents situated at the universities was directed towards making material available in easily accessible form to the preacher in the field'.

¹¹⁸ Dahan, *L'exégèse chrétienne*, p. 416.

¹¹⁹ *Summa theologia*, ed. B. Klumper, i (Quaracchi, 1924) Tractatus introductorius q1.c4.a1ad2, p. 8: 'apprehensio veritatis secundum humanam rationem explicatur per divisiones, definitiones, et ratiocinationes'. Parkes ('Ordinatio', p. 119) points to the influence of the newly discovered Aristotelian logic on Alexander's approach.

¹²⁰ This development raised questions about the relationship of theological reflection to the text of Scripture, which did not proceed according to divisions and definitions: Dahan, *L'exégèse chrétienne*, pp. 416ff. I discuss these issues more fully in the next chapter.

¹²¹ Parkes 'Ordinatio', p. 128, who adds, 'The *compilatio* derives its value from the authenticity of the *auctoritates* employed, but it derives its usefulness from the *ordo* in which the *auctoritates* were arranged'.

¹²² Minnis, 'Late Medieval Discussions of Compilatio and the Rôle of the Compiler', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 101 (1979), pp. 416–17.

creating the Book of Psalms are clear. Ezra was certainly granted special inspiration, but his work was very suggestive of the more ordinary work Gilbert himself engaged in as an interpreter of Scripture. In essence, Gilbert removed the task of creating prophetic history from David and gave it to his editor. David's words had prophetic meaning, but so did the book's structure, and this structure gave Ezra a certain authority even though he was not the author of the words.¹²³ By giving the psalms titles, Ezra made them more intelligible to readers and more obviously adapted to spiritual understanding.¹²⁴ Ezra's role is thus similar to Gilbert's professional task.

Indeed, Gilbert found Ezra's arrangements unsatisfactory, for he decided to tidy up that prophet's work with some rearranging of his own, imposing his own order on the bewildering multiplicity of the text. For Gilbert, the most important principle of the work was ultimately the intention of its author, namely, to conform lost souls to Christ,¹²⁵ but he considered this difficult to recognize, even with Ezra's titles, so he developed a cross-index system, grouping psalms by theological category and numbering them for reference. Gilbert was drawing on a system originally developed by Cassiodorus, who labelled the Psalms by their relationship to the liberal arts, but Gilbert's method was far more systematic.¹²⁶ He set up the Psalms to be studied by subject matter, rather than in their original sequence. He certainly considered their original order to be divinely inspired, but there were still obscurities that needed not just clarification but further interpretation.¹²⁷ The rational principle Gilbert found most helpful for theological instruction was not David's original historical order, nor even Ezra's spiritual one, but rather a thematic structure—not a narrative of prophetic history or a mysterious spiritual arrangement, but an exposition of doctrine.

The original prophetic order, in other words, could hinder comprehension in the classroom and needed to be transformed into a new artificial order imposed by the theologian. In Gilbert's work, one can see a pedagogic technique borne of a systematic habit of mind, one that fitted

¹²³ The use of Ezra reveals that a unified subject matter (*materia*) and David's authorial intention were not sufficient for the Psalms' *auctoritas*; Ezra provided them with the necessary *ordo*. Cf. p. 70 n. 96.

¹²⁴ Gilbert of Poitiers, *In librum Psalmorum*, MS Auct. D.2.1, fol. 9r.

¹²⁵ *Prologus Commentarii*, p. 111.

¹²⁶ Gross-Diaz prints symbols from both Gilbert's and Cassiodorus' system in Appendix One of *Psalms Commentary*.

¹²⁷ Gross-Diaz, '*Lectio Divina*', p. 98. Froehlich calls Gilbert's structure an attempt to reconstruct the original order which Ezra was unable to restore: 'Christian Interpretations', p. 502. This goes too far, since, for Gilbert, Ezra was prophetically inspired and could therefore have known that order; Gilbert clearly wants to see *beyond* the original order.

with the growing need for professional teachers of the arts and of theology.¹²⁸ At the same time, if prophets were ‘those who reveal the hidden things of the Scriptures through interpretations’,¹²⁹ Gilbert’s work was also a sign that academic exegetes could absorb the functions—and authority—of prophets broadly defined.¹³⁰

Gilbert’s assumptions about order were held by Peter Lombard as well. Although Peter did not adopt Gilbert’s innovatory cross-referencing index, he did still see his own task as the interpretation, clarification, and reshaping of the original prophetic revelation.¹³¹ Indeed, Peter’s whole approach to theology was dominated by ordering, structuring, and rearranging: the organization of his *magnum opus*, the *Sentences* (finished c.1158), is based on the premise that teaching theology requires an order that is different from the scriptural.¹³² The prologue of Peter’s *Sentences* emphasizes how it is designed for readers to find more easily what they seek.¹³³

In addition to a focus on order, however, Peter’s treatment of prophecy highlighted two other crucial elements which suggested analogies with the work of theologians: the inner vision of intellect or understanding, and

¹²⁸ Systematizing features in Gilbert’s (and Peter Lombard’s) work are explained in terms of habits of mind by Parkes (*‘Ordinatio’*), and in terms of professionalization by Colish, *‘Psalterium Scholasticorum’*, pp. 531–48.

¹²⁹ Gilbert of Poitiers, *Pauline Epistles commentary*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud lat. 45, fol. 105r, on Eph. 4:11: *‘prophetas qui scripturarum interpretationibus occulta... revelarent’*.

¹³⁰ Also worth noting is that early medieval exegetes had produced continuous works physically independent from Scripture, but that the commentary of twelfth-century schools, incorporated as it was in texts like the *Glossa*, became part of the book of Scripture itself: Rouse and Rouse, *‘Statim invenire’*, p. 207.

¹³¹ Gilbert’s system was simultaneously successful (it appears in numerous manuscripts) and not immediately emulated by others: Gross-Diaz, *Psalms Commentary*, p. 59. Yet, as schools of theology—and the complexity of their subject—continued to grow, marginal symbols reappeared in the thirteenth century with Robert Grosseteste and his students: Rouse and Rouse, *‘Statim invenire’*, p. 205.

¹³² Parkes notes that manuscripts of the *Sentences* reveal rubrication (perhaps done by Peter himself) not only of sources, but also of the *ordinatio* of subject matter: *‘Ordinatio’*, pp. 117–18.

¹³³ *Sententiae*, prol.5: ‘ut... quod quaeritur facilius occurrat’. Peter’s near-contemporary, Bernard of Clairvaux, on the other hand, opened his homilies on the Song of Songs by expressing hope that those encountering the text would take delight in the difficulty of the inquiry: *Super Cantica*, 1.3.5, p. 5. This comparison is made by Rouse and Rouse (*‘Statim invenire’*, pp. 206–7), who also highlight (p. 203) Hugh of St Victor’s method of *inventio* (finding), namely, via recollection of the past, as opposed to a scholarly, textual apparatus: ‘Hugh... seems to be the last major figure to propose memory as the sole or principal means of retrieving information’.

prophecy's non-predictive capacities. These emphases would have profound effects on how later theologians considered the role of inspiration in their own work.

Looking first at 'intellectual' prophecy, one can see Peter's continuation and development of Gilbert of Poitiers's work. Returning to Peter's description of David's uniquely lofty mode of prophecy, we find that he emphasized the prophet's clarity of understanding, just as Gilbert had done: 'other prophets gave their prophecies through the medium of images and words with a veiled meaning, ... but David uttered his prophecies by the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, without any external aid'.¹³⁴ Such understanding resulted in the clear transmission of truths.

Peter's emphasis led to a recognition of inner 'inspiration' as something distinct from other forms of prophecy. The Parisian theologian Philip the Chancellor highlights this development in a question from his *Summa de bono* (c.1230) on the nature of prophecy. After citing Gilbert and Peter's definition—'Prophecy is divine inspiration proclaiming with unshakeable truth the outcome of events'—Philip argues that 'inspiration' only occurs 'properly' (*proprie*) when it happens *without* the aid of images (*visio ymaginaria*). Therefore, he concludes, 'not all prophecy is inspiration', though prophecy is 'commonly' (*communiter*) called this.¹³⁵ 'Inspiration', in other words, is enhanced understanding.

But this process, whereby someone arrived at insight without external aids such as dreams or visions, could also appear similar to philosophical or theological speculation. The *Glossa ordinaria*, for instance, considering the label of 'soliloquy' for the Psalms, noted that a soliloquy was a conversation with oneself, where one learns nothing except from inner truth, as when Augustine, in his own *Soliloquies*, investigated the nature of the soul and of God.¹³⁶ This, the *Glossa* noted, was what David did: 'In the same way it can be said that the prophet investigated with himself about the incarnation of the Son of God and the reparation of the human race'.¹³⁷ The best prophecy could be compared to the methods of the Church Fathers.

¹³⁴ Cf. Peter's *Commentarium in Epistolam I ad Corinthios*, where he glosses prophecy as 'mente intelligendo': PL 191.1664. Augustine had insisted that intellectual vision never deceives, while spiritual or imaginary vision sometimes does: *De Gen. litt.* XII.25.52.

¹³⁵ *Summa de bono*, ed. N. Wicki, ii (Bern, 1985) III.q1, pp. 490–1: 'non omnis prophetia est inspiratio'.

¹³⁶ *Glossa*, ii, p. 457: 'a nullo discit nisi a veritate sibi interius praesidente'.

¹³⁷ *Glossa*, ii, p. 457: 'Eodem modo potest dici propheta secum investigasse de incarnatione filii dei et de reparatione humani generis'. Renewed interest in the genre of internal

Such comparisons raised questions, however: what was the relationship between this inspired insight and other forms of understanding, especially those involving reason? What connection, furthermore, was there between past forms of inspiration and the current working of the Holy Spirit in the Church? These were two of the central questions scholastic theologians faced throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as they reflected on the prophetic tradition and their own professional activities. The Pauline discussion of prophetic preaching in the early Church—and Gregory the Great's application of it to priests and bishops—had already raised the issue of broader, non-predictive forms of prophecy. We have seen some of the difficulties Hugh of St Victor faced in discerning the relationship of patristic texts to Scripture, even as he encouraged contemplative prophecy.

Peter Lombard displays his own uncertainty on these questions, most noticeably when he confronts the word *vates*. In his deeply influential *Sentences*, a discussion of Christian bishops leads Peter to refer to pagan priests, prompting a definition of *vates*:

Vates are named from force of mind (*vis mentis*), whose meaning is manifold. For sometimes it means priest (*sacerdos*), sometimes prophet (*propheta*), sometimes poet (*poeta*).¹³⁸

This threefold meaning based on 'force of mind' highlights the intersection of inspired vision, sacred power, and structured speech. Though a remnant of the ancient pagan world, the etymological link between these phenomena mattered a great deal because names were, for many medieval thinkers, prophetic in themselves, unveiling the hidden significations of a divine pattern.¹³⁹

Modern scholars have not sufficiently attended to the varying fortunes of the term *vates*: as Peter tries to account for the many elements of the *vates* as well as the different models offered by Old Testament prophets and the Pauline Church, he entangles varying strands in important ways. As we will see, prophecy began turning up in surprising places as a term

dialogue was a feature of this period. Cf. not only Hugh of St Victor's *De vanitate mundi*, but also the title of his dialogue on the soul: *Soliloquium de arrha anime*. Anselm of Canterbury's *Monologion* also contributed to this renewal: A. Novikoff, 'Toward a Cultural History of Scholastic Disputation', *American Historical Review*, 117 (2012), pp. 337ff.

¹³⁸ *Sententiae* IV.d24.18: 'Vates a vi mentis appellati sunt, cuius significatio multiplex est. Modo enim sacerdotem, modo prophetam, modo poetam significat.' Gilbert of Poitiers does not use the word *vates* in his Psalm commentary or in any works of his contained in the PL. On the influence of the *Sentences*, see Colish, *Peter Lombard*, i, pp. 10–11.

¹³⁹ Lubac cites, for instance, a twelfth-century commentary on Boethius' *De trinitate*, which said that the imposition of names revealed their place 'in mente divina', and that they were imposed 'instinctu Spiritus sancti': *Exégèse médiévale*, ii/2 (Paris, 1959), p. 209.

used to describe a slew of seemingly unrelated activities, and Peter's discussion helps to account for this. Peter borrowed his definition from Isidore's *Etymologies*, where it appears without further comment under the heading *De clericis*, amidst Isidore's list of priestly offices (Christian and pagan).¹⁴⁰ Yet the word makes other appearances in the *Etymologies*. In the section *De poetis*, Isidore writes:

seers (*vates*) are so called from force of mind (*vis mentis*), or from weaving (*viere*) songs, that is from turning or modulating them.¹⁴¹

Isidore here equates vatic strength of mind with poetic ability to shape words into songs, a talent he relates to divine madness:

their writings are called prophetic (*vaticinia*), because they were inspired to write by a certain force (*vis*), a madness (*vesania*), as it were; or because they link words in rhythms. . . . Indeed, through madness (*furor*) the prophets (*divini*) had this same name.¹⁴²

When speaking of prophets in the section *De prophetis*, Isidore preferred to dwell on their special sight (*videntes*) and predictive speech (*de futuris*).¹⁴³

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, encyclopaedists such as Papias the Grammarian brought Isidore's usages together into a single statement:

vates, named from strength of mind (*vis mentis*), because they gaze as if on future (*futura*) things, . . . a word whose named meaning is multiple, for sometimes it signifies priest (*sacerdos*), sometimes prophet (*propheta*), sometimes poet (*poeta*); or, from weaving (*viere*) songs, that is bending, and thus poets in Latin are *vates*. Their writings were formerly called *vaticinia*, because they were done in a certain madness (*vesania*) as it were.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ *Etymologiae* VII.12.15.

¹⁴¹ *Etymologiae* VIII.7.3; trans., S. Barney et al. (Cambridge, 2006), p. 180 (with alterations): 'vates a vi mentis appellatos . . . vel a viendis carminibus, id est flectendis, hoc est modulandis'.

¹⁴² *Etymologiae* VIII.7.3; trans., p. 180: 'scripta eorum vaticinia dicebantur, quod vi quadam et quasi vesania in scribendo commoverentur, vel quod modis verba conecterent. . . . Etiam per furorem divini eodem erant nomine'.

¹⁴³ *Etymologiae* VII.8.1; trans., p. 166: 'Those whom the pagan world calls bards (*vates*), we call prophets (*prophetae*), as if they were pre-speakers (*praefatores*), because indeed they speak (*porro fatur*) and make true predictions (*praedicare*) about the future (*de futuris*). Those whom we call prophets were called seers (*videntes*) in the Old Testament, because they saw things that others did not see'. By contrast, Isidore discusses poets within the chapter *De Ecclesia et sectis*, placing them amidst heresies, sibyls, magicians, and pagan philosophy and religion. Nonetheless, Isidore did not always follow his own distinction between the pagan *vates* and Christian *propheta*, nor did Church Fathers like Jerome, whose use of *vaticinium* and *vaticinare* for scriptural prophecies appeared in the *Glossa's* prologues to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezra: iii, pp. 1, 99, 221. Cf. p. 55 n. 26.

¹⁴⁴ *Elementarium doctrinae rudimentum* (Venice, 1496), fol. 180r: 'vates dicti a vi mentis quia tanquam futura conspiciant, . . . cuius nominatus significatio multiplex est nam modo

Peter Lombard chose not to make these explicit etymological connections to verse-writing and to madness, but he did accept that the word *vates* embraced poet, priest, and prophet all at once, connected by *vis mentis*.¹⁴⁵ Without negative connotations for any of these terms, however, and without consignment to the pagan past, the relationship between them is ambiguous in Peter's hands.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, while Peter, like Papias, isolates *vis mentis* from inspired poetic frenzy, he goes further and omits any reference to prediction as a distinguishing feature.

I will return to the issue of prediction shortly, but considering first the central quality Peter identifies as vatic—*vis mentis*—a question arises: in what way does Peter believe it applies equally to poets, priests, and prophets? Used in relation to prophets, one might assume that this 'strength of mind' is something inspired by the Holy Spirit, yet Peter uses the phrase elsewhere (in a gloss on Rom. 1:20) as the distinctive quality of philosophers. Philosophers (and Peter seems to mean pagan ones, since he uses the past tense) understood Nature by transcending the world's mutability (*quidquid mutabile est*), and they did so, in Peter's description, through what sounds very much like prophetic vision: 'nature . . . is understood not by bodily or imaginary vision, but only by strength of mind (*vis mentis*), which is called understanding (*intellectus*)'.¹⁴⁷ In describing this contemplative philosophical vision, Peter places it in the very same Augustinian category he put David's prophecy: of the three possibilities—bodily, spiritual, and intellectual—both David's vision and the philosophers' belong to the third, that is, intellectual: 'De tertio genere est ista visio'.¹⁴⁸ This notion of Peter's—of intellectual vision

sacerdotem, modo prophetam, modo poetam significat, vel a viendis carminibus idest flectendis et pro inde poetae latine vates, scripta eorum olim vaticinia dicebantur quod in quadam et quasi vesania'.

¹⁴⁵ This combination proved durable, as is clear from the similar treatment in Ugucione of Pisa's late twelfth-century *Derivationes*, ed. E. Cecchini and G. Arbizzoni, ii (Florence, 2004), p. 1272: a *vates* is a *sacerdos*, to which definition Ugucione adds, 'quandoque sic dicitur poeta, quandoque propheta divinus'. Ugucione, like Papias, makes prediction central—'vates a vi mentis dicti sunt vel a video, quia futura videbant'—and poets insane, since they speak 'per furorem'.

¹⁴⁶ Peter's neutral combination of roles is in contrast to his older contemporary, Conrad of Hirsau, who distinguished *poeta* from *vates* to the poet's disadvantage, *Dialogus*, p. 75; trans., *MLTC*, p. 43: the poet (*poeta*) is a maker who 'gives shape to things (*factor vel formator*), because he says what is false instead of the truth', while the *vates* 'gets his name from his mental power (*vis mentis*)'. Conrad then links this *vis mentis* with prediction (*intuitus futurorum*).

¹⁴⁷ *Commentarium in Epistolam ad Romanos*, PL 191.1327: 'natura . . . intellecta, non corporea, vel imaginaria visione, sed tantum intellecta ea vi mentis, quae dicitur intellectus'. Peter, in fact, is repeating Gilbert's commentary on the same passage: MS Laud lat. 45, fol. 4r.

¹⁴⁸ *In Romanos*, col. 1328. Peter does, however, make certain distinctions between the types of revelation: if pagans of the past had been granted a vision of the Trinity, there

transcending mutability—is comparable to that used by Hugh of St Victor and adopted by contemporaries such as Otto of Freising and John of Salisbury as modes of contemplation and of historical thinking.¹⁴⁹ Peter continues along similar lines: by using *vis mentis* to introduce an implicit comparison between philosophers and the prophet David, he extends the expansive meaning of *vates* to include philosophers.

But to see the links between prophecy and the work of Christian thinkers required another suggestive element, an element which emerged from Peter's assessment of the traditional principle of prophecy as interpretation. This assessment could be found in Peter's collection of Pauline exegesis (1139–41), which became a standard scholastic reference along with his Psalm commentary.¹⁵⁰ Discussing prophecy in the early Church, described by St Paul as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12, 14), Peter notes in his commentary on 1 Corinthians that the gifts of the Spirit are social or communal, for the building up of the Church.¹⁵¹ Within these gifts, Peter defines prophecy as prediction (*praedicere futura*).¹⁵² But, after noting that another gift, the *interpretatio sermonum*, was what Joseph received in Genesis, Peter proceeds to offer a second definition of prophecy, no longer calling it prediction: a prophet, he says, is one who explains the hidden things of Scripture.¹⁵³ Peter does claim here that interpreting Scripture prophetically means explaining the future,¹⁵⁴ but this results in confusion: do prophets in the Church after Christ only look to the Book of Revelation? Furthermore, in his commentary on Paul's letter to the Ephesians, Peter distinguishes between interpretation and prediction: 'for in the New Testament, prophets are called explainers (*explanatores*) of Scripture; nevertheless, there were some in the early period of the faith predicting the future (*futura praedicere*)'.¹⁵⁵ Thus, Peter's attempts to sort out the meaning of *vates* reveal uncertainty about contemporary prophecy.

Peter Lombard's vast influence perpetuated the possibilities for seeing prophecy in broad terms and for blurring many of its distinctive

would have been no need for the Incarnation; thus, their vision was revealed *per opera* (i.e. through nature and history) rather than *per doctrinam* or *per inspirationem*.

¹⁴⁹ See Ch. 1, pp. 46–8.

¹⁵⁰ Colish, *Peter Lombard*, i, p. 156.

¹⁵¹ *In 1 Cor.*, col. 1652: 'ad utilitatem Ecclesiae aedificandae'. These gifts are not identical to the seven gifts of the Spirit according to Isa. 11:2–3, which include wisdom and understanding.

¹⁵² *In 1 Cor.*, col. 1653.

¹⁵³ *In 1 Cor.*, col. 1665: 'qui exponit Scripturas quae multis occultae sunt'.

¹⁵⁴ *In 1 Cor.*, col. 1665: 'exponam Scripturam quae de futuris agit'.

¹⁵⁵ *In Ephesios*, col. 200: 'In Novo enim Testamento prophetae dicuntur explanatores Scripturarum; tamen fuerunt quidam primordio fidei futura praedicentes'. Peter cites as predictors Agabus and the daughters of Philip from Acts 21:8–10 (who nonetheless are not shown interpreting Scripture).

boundaries. The gift of spiritual understanding (*spiritus intelligentiae*) clearly has its origins in the Pauline notion of interpretative prophecy, but other uses of the term 'prophecy' are more surprising. Peter of Poitiers (c. 1130–1215), a master of theology at Paris, for instance, cites in his Psalm commentary Gregory the Great's definition of prophecy as a vision of past, present, or future,¹⁵⁶ but when Peter describes prophecy about the present he does not give the usual examples (of the Visitation, for instance); instead, he identifies such prophecy with the visionary understanding of (Pseudo-)Dionysius and with an astrologer's prediction of a solar eclipse.¹⁵⁷ If prediction is not categorized as a vision of the future but rather of the present, then Peter of Poitiers must have in mind prophecy *in* the present, in the current Sixth Age, without concern for the eschatological future. In other words, there is contemporary prophecy, and it is now accessible to someone who could attain either Dionysius' contemplative heights or an astrologer's learning.

Inner inspiration could result in other forms of secondary, non-predictive prophecy. One such version is visible in Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica*, the influence of which was perhaps even more widespread than Peter Lombard's work.¹⁵⁸ During his account of Samuel and Saul's meeting (1 Kgs 10), Peter Comestor describes how Samuel first established groups of people who would wander, singing psalms to the Lord (*jugiter psallentes Domino*): these people, he adds, 'were said to prophesy, that is, to praise God continually, while some of them also prophesied [by predicting]'.¹⁵⁹ To sing psalms—and thus to praise God—is to prophesy. The ambiguous line between song or music and prophecy is also evident in Peter the Chanter's late twelfth-century commentary on 4 Kgs 3:15, Elisha's use of a harpist (*psalter*) to help him prophesy. Peter says music can elevate someone to contemplation ('ad superiora rapitur . . . ad contemplationem'), albeit only a good person; the ambivalent power of music drives a bad person to licentiousness.¹⁶⁰ This uncertain relationship between music and

¹⁵⁶ See the Introduction, p. 15.

¹⁵⁷ *Distinctiones in Psalmos*, MS Laud Misc. 499, fol. 1v.

¹⁵⁸ On the *Historia*'s popularity, see J. H. Morey, 'Peter Comestor, Biblical Paraphrase, and the Medieval Popular Bible', *Speculum*, 68 (1993), pp. 6–35.

¹⁵⁹ *Historia scholastica*, PL 198.1304: 'dicebantur prophetare, id est jugiter Deum laudare, et forte aliqui quandoque prophetabant ex eis'. Peter's definition of prophecy as songs of praise is not in the original scriptural text. The second part of the quotation does not explicitly name prediction as the other form, but Peter continues by noting that Saul prophesied about Gog and Magog as well as judgement for good and evil people—both eschatological themes.

¹⁶⁰ *Super libros Regum*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 371, fol. 53v. Such ambiguity was encouraged by striking parallels between exegesis on the Book of Psalms and on liturgical hymns found, for instance, in the widespread *Expositio hymnorum*, a twelfth-century version of which is in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 40, fols 90–107. Cf. Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmorum*, praef. 15, p. 19.

prophecy contributed in Nicholas Trevet's Psalm Commentary to blur the lines between historical and poetic knowledge, but it could be found already in both Gilbert of Poitiers and Peter Lombard, for whom the Psalms were praise of God combined with a canticle, that is, 'the mind's exultant declaration about eternal things'.¹⁶¹ Thus, William Brito's mid-thirteenth-century *Summa* linked prophecy and poetic song: '*vaticinium*, id est... prophetia, et vaticinia dicuntur poetarum carmina'.¹⁶² Divine inspiration was of course central to prophecy, but the outward manifestations of inner or 'intellectual' vision were not very different from a range of activities or impulses not so clearly supernatural in origin.

Paradoxically, Peter Lombard's emphasis on David's elite status in terms of inner clarity helped make the boundaries of prophecy more uncertain, because it made the highest, 'intellectual' form of prophecy often appear more similar to marginal forms than it did to forms such as Ezekiel's enigmatic visions. The same fine line between elite and marginal is strikingly parallel to the relationship between prophet and hagiographer established by Jerome's inclusion of David's Psalms among the *hagiographa*. How could the highest form of prophecy, Davidic, be the basis for a book categorized among the more marginal works of Scripture?¹⁶³ The standard explanation of David's inclusion among those writers peripheral to the main current of revelation was that he was a prophet not by office or mission, but by grace.¹⁶⁴ But the question that remained unanswered in twelfth-century explanations was whether this grace could elevate others in the same way. How did it differ from other workings of the Spirit in the world, or in a spiritual gift such as wisdom? At a time when the boundaries of Scripture—and of teaching authority—were still under discussion, such questions were not surprising, but they were troubling. The point is not that these questions led to the denigration of the Psalter, but rather that the answers theologians gave to justify keeping the Psalms supreme and to justify David's elevated insight pointed towards affinities with more ordinary activities, including their own. In other words, Peter Lombard's expansive conception of intellectual prophecy highlights how discussions of the *vates* and of hagiographers were also implicitly discussions about sacred authority.

¹⁶¹ Gilbert of Poitiers, *Prologus Commentarii*, p. 111: 'mentis exultatio habita de aeternis prorumpens in vocem'; Peter Lombard, *In Psalmos*, col. 226.

¹⁶² *Summa Britonis*, ed. L. W. Daly and B. A. Daly, ii (Padua, 1975), p. 817. Brito derives *vaticinia* from *vates* and *cano*, *-ere* (to sing), and calls both poets and prophets *vates* (pp. 573, 603).

¹⁶³ Augustine, for instance, declared one of the hagiographers, Job, to be a gentile whose prophecy was essentially unnecessary—a surplus to the main strand of sacred history: *De civ.* XVIII.47.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Hugh of St Victor's explanation: Ch. 1, p. 22.

Debates about these implicit assumptions would become far more explicit in the next century, and they will be examined in the next two chapters. We can point now, however, to the ways in which these twelfth-century themes line up with debates about sacred authority emerging from the eleventh-century Investiture Controversy and the movement known as the Gregorian Reform. Two repercussions in particular, already laid out in the Introduction, should be restated here: an emphasis on the distinctiveness of ordained clerics, and debates over whether the basis of that distinctiveness sprang from the priest's sacred office (*officium*) or his purity of life (*meritum vitae*).¹⁶⁵ Because of such issues, twelfth-century ecclesiastical institutions sought to establish on a firm theoretical foundation the sources of their authority.

The simultaneously developing interest in prophecy and inspiration contributed to—and was also encouraged by—these debates about authority. On the one hand, prophecy became a way for non-clerics to reform the Church by pointing out clerical failures. Hildegard of Bingen, for instance, invoked prophetic inspiration as the basis for her visions and for her role as reformer of Christian life, and her prestige came to rival the professional masters of theology, whom she often criticized for studying more for fame than for piety.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, many clerics looked to earlier prophetic roles in order to form new justifications for their own social and professional functions. These functions were 'intellectual' in the sense that they centred on the production and organization of knowledge in new institutions of learning.

Such developments took place within the context of a well-documented phenomenon beginning in the twelfth century and extending through the thirteenth: the perceived rise of a new social function, *studium*, to rival the

¹⁶⁵ During this period, the word *clericus* had two meanings: ordained priest, or scholar. See M. Teeuwen, *The Vocabulary of Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 53–4. To avoid confusion, I use 'cleric' only to mean priest. On Gregorian Reform, see the Introduction, pp. 16–17.

¹⁶⁶ For Hildegard's understanding of her prophetic visions and role, see, e.g., her letter to the archbishop of Trier, *Epistolarium*, ed. L. van Acker, CCCM 91–91b (Turnhout, 1991), Ep. 26r, pp. 74–5; and *Scivias*, ed. A. Führkötter and A. Carlevaris, CCCM 43–43a (Turnhout, 1978) I, p. 3; III.11.18, p. 586. On Hildegard's prestige, note the opinion of an abbot reported by Guibert of Gembloux: 'I do not think that the most eminent masters (*magistri*) of France at this time, however much they may shine in sharpness of intellect, can follow entirely the force and depth of certain words placed in [her] letter, unless by revelation of the Spirit (*spiritu revelante*) by which they are spoken': *Epistolae*, ed. A. Derolez, CCCM 66 (Turnhout, 1988), Ep. 18, p. 229. For Hildegard's criticism of cleric-scholars, see *Explanatio Symboli Sancti Athanasii*, ed. C. P. Evans, in P. Dronke et al. (eds), *Opera minora*, CCCM 226 (Turnhout, 2007), p. 128. For a survey of this aspect of her life, see C. J. Mews, 'Hildegard and the Schools', in C. Burnett and P. Dronke (eds), *Hildegard of Bingen and the Context of her Thought and Art* (London, 1998), pp. 89–110.

political and the ecclesiastical.¹⁶⁷ The increased stature bestowed on the learned at this time can be summed up in the claim of Stephen Langton (d.1228), a Parisian master of theology, that it is the learned teachers, the *doctores*, who are the great noble figures of society (*maiores*), those who provide spiritual nourishment to everyone else.¹⁶⁸ In the eyes of these learned men, their knowledge distinguished them from other groups, and even led them to see their activity as part of a 'new stage' in the development of doctrine.¹⁶⁹ The growing body of professional theologians were positioning themselves as the successors to the Church Fathers, in the role of *arbiter fidei*. They were also becoming successors to the prophets, since the concept of the *maiores* derived from the theory that there had always been a group of greater people with explicit faith in Christ's redemption: in the Old Testament, these were the prophets who had the duty to teach and preach and explain this faith to the lesser ones (*minores*). This arrangement was time-dependent: after the Incarnation, everyone could have such explicit faith. Yet scholastic theologians nonetheless came to insist that an analogous distinction between *maiores* (theologians) and *minores* (largely the laity) continued in the post-Incarnation Church, so that *minores* only needed to believe explicitly in certain general articles of faith, while the *maiores* would be responsible for understanding everything else.¹⁷⁰

The new intellectual class defined itself not just in relation to the laity or unlearned priests, but also to bishops, who generally asserted control of preaching and teaching. Bishops were considered possessors of sacramental power (*sacerdotium*) through ordination (*ex spiritu*) and of jurisdictional power through their office (*ex officio*).¹⁷¹ Since at least Gregory the Great's time, as we have seen, bishops had claimed the role formerly associated with the prophets in 1 Corinthians in their spiritual guidance

¹⁶⁷ A. Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1978), ch. 10; E. Marmursztejn, *L'Autorité des maîtres* (Paris, 2007), ch. 1. Paris was the home of *studium* in the thirteenth century, according to the canon Alexander of Roes: *Memoriale de prerogativa Romani imperii*, in H. Grundmann and H. Heimpel (eds), *Die Schriften des Alexander von Roes* (Weimar, 1949), 25, p. 48.

¹⁶⁸ Cited in G. Duby, *Les trois ordres: Ou, L'imaginaire du féodalisme* (Paris, 1978), p. 384.

¹⁶⁹ M. Colish, 'Authority and Interpretation in Scholastic Theology', in Judith Frishman et al. (eds), *Religious Identity and the Problem of Historical Foundation: The Foundational Character of Authoritative Sources in the History of Christianity and Judaism* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 371, 385.

¹⁷⁰ See, e.g., Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* III.d25.2, and Aquinas's later concurral: *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, Leonine 22, 14.a11.resp. Van Engen describes this distinction between *maiores* and *minores* as 'of central importance in medieval religious culture': J. Van Engen, 'The Christian Middle Ages as an Historiographical Problem', *American Historical Review*, 91 (1986), p. 545.

¹⁷¹ J. M. M. H. Thijssen, *Censure and Heresy at the University of Paris, 1200–1400* (Philadelphia, PA, 1998), p. 95.

of the Church in the world. This prophetic role, Alain Boureau has argued, was distinct from the sacramental, and it 'maintained its pertinence' as a power often implicitly evoked by holy monks and hermits.¹⁷² From the twelfth century onward, this role was claimed by theologians as these professionals, aided by the rise of universities in the thirteenth century, sought authority for their work through the social function of *studium* rather than through the office of *sacerdotium*.¹⁷³

Viewed from this perspective, assertions that 'hagiographers' such as Solomon and David did not need the explicit office or mission of a prophet but only the special grace of God could bolster the power of the theologians' own *vis mentis*, not sacramental but intellectual. The sacred authority of the scriptural text could be appropriated by the wise interpreter of that text. Thus, even though the canonical supremacy of the priesthood was 'the most consistent theory of hierarchy the Middle Ages knew',¹⁷⁴ the work of scholastic thinkers to justify their own roles as prophetic exegetes and intellectuals raised questions which challenged this supremacy. If ordination was supposed to separate the priest from, for instance, the philosopher, marking the sacramental office as distinct and paramount regardless of someone else's learning, scholastic theories of prophecy which emphasized its rationality and kinship to wisdom functioned to narrow that gap again.

V. CONCLUSION

The twelfth-century project of systematizing and ordering had profound effects on how thinkers understood spiritual realities. As M.-D. Chenu notes, 'Reason, by introducing "well-ordered arrangement" (*artificioso successu*), somehow entered into the structuring of the faith itself'.¹⁷⁵ Such a project, I contend, also affected the concept of prophecy, the sort of inspiration theologians would recognize in sacred texts and in their own activity. Certainly, theologians did not stop thinking altogether about sacred history in Scripture as Hugh of St Victor presented it; the success

¹⁷² A. Boureau, 'Intellectuals in the Middle Ages, 1957-95', in M. Rubin (ed.), *The Work of Jacques Le Goff and the Challenges of Medieval History* (Woodbridge, 1997), p. 153.

¹⁷³ Boureau sees in the rise of *studium* the revival of a distinction made in the early Church: 'Intellectuals', pp. 152-3.

¹⁷⁴ Murray, *Reason*, p. 258.

¹⁷⁵ M.-D. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century*, trans. J. Taylor and L. K. Little (Toronto, 1997), p. 280. Cf. his remarks (p. 298) on the *summa* genre: it began as 'only a collection' of knowledge, but eventually it 'proposed to give to this knowledge an internal order which would generate its highest intelligibility'.

of a work like Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica* shows this.¹⁷⁶ But it was clear that exegetes were developing greater appreciation of the 'artificially' ordered qualities of a prophetic text.

Prophecy, furthermore, was taking on different meanings so as to incorporate the specific scholastic tasks of ordering, clarifying authorities, and teaching doctrine. We can see emphasis on the broadening of the prophetic spectrum, from directly inspired vision to the interpretation, clarification, and teaching of that vision, with distinct emphases emerging from the intellectual activity of the schools. This broad version is different from Hugh of St Victor's, which proceeded via the knowledge and contemplation of history. Many elements of this version could be accommodated within a tradition going back to Augustine, Cassiodorus, and Gregory. At the same time, these developments contained within themselves the kernel of a new set of difficulties. The elevation of the Book of Psalms as an ideal doctrinal form of prophecy derived from inner insight helped a growing class of theologians to recognize broad or secondary forms of prophecy in more ordinary forms of 'inspiration', which led, in turn, to confusions about those ordinary forms. The task of the next two chapters is to trace the effects of these developments.

¹⁷⁶ Peter studied at the abbey of St Victor: Ferruolo, *Origins of the University*, p. 30.

3

Polemic, Preaching, and Early Dominican Assessments of Prophetic Authority

One of the great tasks undertaken by thirteenth-century thinkers was the consolidation of questions which had occupied the schools of the previous century. The relationship of inspiration and authority was one of the most important questions unresolved amidst growing concern about how to assess the contemporary workings of the Holy Spirit. A desire for clarification in the first half of the thirteenth century is evident: the Dominicans Hugh of St Cher and Albert the Great were just two of the many theologians who devoted treatises to answering the question, *quid sit prophetia*?¹ The twelfth century's initial forays were taken up in different ways. Theoretical assessments of prophecy increasingly had to account for challenges arising from the claims of other prophets, whether externally from Islam or internally from apparent heretics or allegedly inspired preachers. In consequence, prophecy and inspiration became important subjects of polemical literature from the twelfth century onward.

For the Dominican Order, founded as an order of preachers concerned particularly with combatting heresy, determining the boundaries of sacred authority and the nature of prophetic inspiration was crucial. But early Dominican theorists by no means spoke with one voice on these matters. This chapter highlights their multivalent (and often conflicting) conceptions of inspiration, as growing tensions over the scope of current-day inspiration placed great pressure on theologians to work out a solution.

¹ J.-P. Torrell is one of the few scholars to study such treatises in depth, focusing primarily on their epistemology. See, e.g., *Recherches sur la théorie de la prophétie au moyen âge* (Fribourg, 1992). Schlosser's *Lucerna in caliginoso loco: Aspekte des Prophetie-Begriffes in der scholastischen Theologie* (Paderborn, 2000) provides a helpful thematic overview of theological concerns.

I. QUID SIT PROPHETIA? THE CASE OF ISLAM

Even as Peter Lombard was laying the groundwork for scholastic theories of inspiration, one of his contemporaries revealed how a thorough understanding of prophecy was required to confront challenging assertions of sacred authority from outside Christianity, as well as from inside. Concern about Jewish interpretations of prophecy affected how theologians approached issues of scriptural exegesis, but not how they dealt with questions about *current-day* prophecy.² More serious in this regard was Islam, which began to emerge in the twelfth century as a force Christian thinkers had to reckon with.³ Other challenges would follow—Joachimism, mystical visionaries, humanists—but Muslim claims for their post-Incarnational prophet helped spur initial reactions and shape later scholastic categories.⁴ Peter the Venerable (c.1092–1156), abbot of Cluny, was one of the first to take up the task of confronting Islamic prophecy, in two works, the *Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum* (c.1146), a short summary of Muslim doctrine intended for Christian clerics, and the *Liber contra sectam sive haeresim Saracenorum* (c.1155–6), an apologetic work addressed both to Muslims and fellow Christians.⁵ In these works we see ‘the earliest set of guidelines for distinguishing true and false prophecy in the post-Augustinian Church’.⁶ A central focus of Peter’s polemic is the nature of prophecy and its implications for sacred history and sacred authority. His concerns were developed by other polemicists, and they eventually became themes in Dominican treatises on prophecy.

² For a late twelfth-century debate about Jewish interpretations of prophecy, see I. van ’t Spijker, ‘The Literal and the Spiritual: Richard of St Victor and the Multiple Meaning of Scripture’, in I. van ’t Spijker (ed.), *The Multiple Meaning of Scripture: The Role of Exegesis in Early-Christian and Medieval Culture* (Leiden, 2009), pp. 225–47.

³ Cf. R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), p. 3: ‘The existence of Islam was the most far-reaching problem in medieval Christendom... at every level of experience’. Southern argues that the rapid spread of knowledge about Islam (and, in particular, Muhammad’s role as prophet) occurred in the aftermath of the First Crusade, from 1120 onwards (pp. 28, 34–6). Actual conversions to Islam, while not extensive, were also ‘not rare’: A. J. Forey, ‘Western Converts to Islam (Later Eleventh to Later Fifteenth Centuries)’, *Traditio*, 68 (2013), p. 230.

⁴ The case of Islam weakens Bynum’s claim that twelfth-century polemics against heresy were less a quarrel with a clearly-existent ‘other’ than a desire to classify and draw boundaries: C. W. Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York, 1995), pp. 214–15.

⁵ Peter relied on Robert of Ketton’s Latin translation of the Koran, completed in 1143: J. Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton, NJ, 1962), pp. 35–6.

⁶ Anderson mistakenly gives this distinction to a letter by Innocent III from 1199 (discussed below): W. Anderson, *The Discernment of Spirits: Assessing Visions and Visionaries in the Late Middle Ages* (Tübingen, 2011), p. 49.

Twelfth-century thinkers reflected seriously on the composition of sacred texts, so it is not surprising to find that Peter the Venerable remarks on the form of the Koran itself. While not discussed much by modern scholars, Peter's abhorrence of Koranic idiom is a key element of his rejection of Muhammad's prophetic standing.⁷ Peter writes in his *Summa*,

Thus instructed by the best Jewish and heretical doctors, Muhammad created his Koran, and wove (*contexere*) a constructed and criminal scripture in his own barbarous way out of both Jewish fables (*fabulae*) and the incantations of heretics.⁸

The Koran is not only fictive in nature, but it is constructed crudely, a point Peter repeats in *Contra sectam*: '[Muhammad] narrates many things in his own barbaric and monstrous manner of speaking'.⁹ There is nothing natural or ordered about this sacred text. Like Peter, Mark of Toledo, in a preface to his translation of the Koran (1210), spoke of its 'confused and unconnected style' (*stilus turbatus et dissolutus*), as if written by a 'possessed' or 'crazy' man.¹⁰ Disordered style, disordered mind—no divine revelation here, only human fiction.¹¹ In direct contrast to the Psalms, the lack of a prophetically guaranteed literary order doomed the Koran in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Christian eyes. Petrus Alphonsi (d.1110) had claimed that the original order (*ordo*) of the Koran had been irrevocably lost, and that it had been put together at random by Muhammad's followers, a claim repeated by the Dominican encyclopaedist Vincent of Beauvais (d.1264).¹² The Muslims, in other words, had no Ezra, no authenticating editor to give meaningful shape to the text.

⁷ Torrell does not mention this aspect of Peter's critique in his assessment of Peter's work (*Recherches*, pp. 75–100), nor does Kritzeck, while Norman Daniel's treatment does not compare it to Christian discussions of their own sacred texts: see N. Daniel, *Islam and the West* (Edinburgh, 1960), pp. 57–67.

⁸ *Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum*, ed. R. Gleis, in *Schriften zum Islam* (Altenberge, 1985), 7, p. 8: 'Sic ab optimis doctoribus, Iudaicis et haereticis, Mahumetus institutus Alkoran suum condidit, et tam ex fabulis Iudaicis quam ex haereticorum neniis confectam nefariam scripturam barbaro illo suo modo contexit'.

⁹ *Contra sectam Saracenorum*, ed. Gleis, in *Schriften*, I.73, p. 128: 'illo suo barbarico ac prodigioso loquendi more plurima narrat'.

¹⁰ ['Praefatio'], ed. M.-T. d'Alverny and G. Vajda, 'Marc de Tolède, traducteur d'Ibn Tumart', *Al-Andalus*, 16 (1951), pp. 259–66: 'quasi a demonio arreptus' (p. 263), 'loquitur sicut qui delirat' (p. 266). Mark appears to suggest Muhammad was faking epileptic fits to give his words greater authority through apparent rapture: 'ut in epilepticis [*sic*] fieri solet' (p. 263). He notes that Muhammad's followers excused this stylistic disorder (*turbatio*) precisely because they believed he received his messages directly from an angel (p. 266).

¹¹ ['Praefatio'], pp. 264, 266: 'verba que confingebat . . . per fantasticas delusiones'. Peter the Venerable, however, accepts demonic possession, believing that Muhammad could only produce such *fabulae* and *deliramenta* through the devil's help: *Summa Saracenorum*, 16, p. 18.

¹² Petrus Alphonsi, *Dialogus contra Iudaeos* V, PL 157.604; trans. I. Resnick, *Dialogue against the Jews*, The Fathers of the Church, Medieval Continuation 8 (Washington, DC,

In some cases, polemicists revealed their aversion to any ties between prophecy and poetry. Muslims claimed that the rhythm and diction of the Koran was miraculous from an uneducated man's mouth and thus guaranteed its divine standing, but for the Paris-educated Florentine Dominican missionary Riccoldo of Monte Croce (d.1320), this unnatural order was the proof of its madness. Since the Koran had no unifying subject matter, its only order (*ordo*) was created through poetic elements such as grammar and rhythm (*grammaticalis et rithmicus*), and therefore its order was 'not fit for God'.¹³ Ignoring his contemporary Nicholas Trevet's emphasis on the poetic structure of the Psalms, Riccoldo asserted that no true prophet spoke as poet.¹⁴ In this case, the same qualities that helped prove to Trevet the Psalms' sacred origin revealed to Riccoldo the Koran's secular one.

When Peter the Venerable turned his attention from the text to the text's creator, he struggled to articulate ways in which he could exclude Muhammad from the ranks of sacred prophets. His *Contra sectam* was Latin Christendom's first expansive polemical use of theories of inspiration, and in it he tries out every possible definition of prophecy. The Muslim claim that Muhammad was the 'seal of the prophets' (*signaculum prophetarum*), the final one, shapes the focus of his attack.¹⁵ Peter articulates a definition of prophecy like Gregory the Great's in order to assess Muhammad:

Prophecy is the utterance of unknown things either past, present, or future, done not by human creation (*inventio*) but by divine inspiration (*inspiratio*).¹⁶

Acknowledging that prophecy does not require prediction, but rather the revelation of what is hidden at any time, Peter nonetheless believes Muhammad falls far short of prophecy, and he challenges Muslims to

2006), pp. 160–1; Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum maius*, iv, (Douai, 1624, repr. Graz, 1964–5) XXIII.52–5.

¹³ *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, ed. J. Mériçoux, *Memorie domenicane*, n.s., 17 (1986) XI, p. 114: 'Deo non competit'. Riccoldo devoted an entire chapter to the theme, *Quod Alcoranum est lex inordinate* (pp. 113–14). Unlike the prophet Moses, who began *ordinatissime* from Creation according to the *ordo historie*, and other prophets who proceeded according to the *ordo temporis*, the Koran—while certainly beautiful (*pulcherrimus*)—has none of these qualities: 'in the Koran, there is no order whatsoever, neither an order of time (*ordo temporis*) . . . nor of history (*ordo historie*). Nor of subject matter (*ordo materie*), for [Muhammad] never follows one subject (*materia*) in an orderly way (*ordinate*), but rather immediately shifts to another different matter, as if truly possessed (*sicut arrepticius*)'.

¹⁴ *Contra legem* IV, p. 77: 'God spoke to Moses and Job and other holy prophets and never spoke to them through rhythms or verses' ('per rithmos vel versus').

¹⁵ *Contra sectam* II.137, p. 206. Robert of Ketton's translation spread knowledge of this Islamic teaching across Europe, and it was noted by later writers such as William of Tyre (c.1130–1186) and Jacques de Vitry (c.1160/70–1240): Daniel, *Islam*, pp. 19–20, 27.

¹⁶ *Contra sectam* II.97, p. 158: 'Prophetia est rerum ignotarum aut de praeteritis aut de praesentibus aut de futuris non humana inventione, sed divina inspiratione facta prolatio'.

show how Muhammad prophesied in any of the three times.¹⁷ The Koran does not describe prophetic counselling of anyone in the present, nor Muhammad's prediction of anything, certainly not of his military defeats. Furthermore, Peter insists, there was no material proof of Muhammad's prophetic powers: Christians believe their prophets, he says, because they have proof by signs (*signa*) or miracles (*miracula*), as well as by the effect of what they preached.¹⁸

This last criterion, visible demonstration, was new. It was certainly not part of the exegetical discussions of prophecy examined in Chapter Two. In confronting challenges to the Christian theological understanding of prophecy, Peter sought clear proof in the visible world. Yet, miracles were a difficult criterion to invoke. Indeed, André Vauchez has argued that miraculous powers as a component of sanctity proved to be too fundamentally ambiguous for official canonization processes by the end of the twelfth century, since dissidents and heretics also seemed to perform them. Innocent III (pope 1198–1216) began devaluing miracles in favour of virtuous behaviour and orthodox belief.¹⁹ Miracles did not disappear quite so easily, however, at least for polemical purposes, although their ambiguity did not clear up prophets' already uncertain relationship to sanctity.

For Peter, a prophet is a messenger (*nuntius*), and his actions are equivalent to preaching (*praedicatio*); therefore Peter calls prophecy a grace (from which Muhammad is excluded).²⁰ But since Peter admits that it is possible for wicked people (*mali*) to be truthful prophets, this grace cannot be discernible based on a prophet's virtue alone. Nonetheless, Peter insists that good prophets are virtuous and bad ones are reprobates (*reproba*) not worthy of the name.²¹ This same ambiguity can be found in Peter Lombard's Psalm prologue: he accepts that there are wicked prophets while simultaneously promoting the relationship between virtue and prophetic gift, stating that David's gift was due to

¹⁷ *Contra sectam* II.102, p. 164.

¹⁸ *Contra sectam* II.127, pp. 192–4. At this time, the notion of *miraculum* was also close to that of *exemplum*, or illustration of the faith: A. Vauchez, *Saints, prophètes et visionnaires* (Paris, 1999), pp. 13–14.

¹⁹ *Saints*, pp. 12, 35.

²⁰ *Contra sectam* I.88, p. 148; II.123, 131–2, pp. 190, 198–200.

²¹ *Contra sectam* II.131–2, pp. 198–200. Peter names *auguri*, *harioli*, *haruspices*, *magi*, and *sortilegi* as those who should be called 'diviners' (*divini*) and not 'prophets' (*prophetæ*). Cf. John of Salisbury on Saul's consultation of the witch of Endor (1 Kgs 28): 'Scripture asserts that reprobate prophets (*prophetæ reprobi*) are diviners (*divinatores*), not prophets', *Policraticus I–IV*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, CCCM 118 (Turnhout, 1993) II.27, pp. 155–6; trans., J. B. Pike, *Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers* (Minneapolis, MN, 1938), p. 135.

his repentance.²² The uncertainties created by the possibilities of *mali prophetae* clearly influence Peter the Venerable's desire for confirmation both by miracles and a virtuous life. But once *mali prophetae* were admitted as potentially truthful, such tests could only be partially sufficient.²³

Peter clearly felt the need to set true prophecy on firmer ground. In the next section of *Contra sectam* he divides prophets into good and bad, and divides the good further into those preaching universal (*universalia*) or particular things (*particularia*).²⁴ Although this division does not fully acknowledge the role of *mali prophetae*—they are merely described as preaching falsehoods—Peter's categories reveal an attempt to classify prophecy based on the categories of sacred history. Universal prophecy requires both universal content and audience, but it is also delineated by time. Thus, good universal prophecy is equivalent to everything preached about Christ in the first five ages of the world, and it therefore ceased with John the Baptist; he was the true 'seal of the prophets', not Muhammad.²⁵ So insistent is Peter on this historical division that Paul's predictions of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3–4) do not count as universal.²⁶ Good prophets of particulars, on the other hand, only speak words for specific peoples on specific occasions, such as Jonah's warnings to Nineveh.²⁷ Particular or personal prophecy has not ceased, Peter says, citing Paul's prediction of future apostates (2 Tim. 4:3–4) as an example.²⁸ Such prophecy, indeed, has been given to many and may perhaps (*fortasse*) be still given to more.²⁹ Nonetheless, Peter is cautious: he gives no extra-scriptural instances and

²² In *Psalmos*, praef., col. 59. Gilbert of Poitiers also accepted that prophecy happened in wicked people, listing Caiaphas, Balaam, the Sibyl, and non-Christian (*infideles*) philosophers: *Prologus Commentarii*, p. 111. Gilbert was the first to draw all four of these together as examples of evil prophets: T. Gross-Diaz, *The Psalms Commentary of Gilbert of Poitiers* (Leiden, 1996), pp. 88–9. The grouping did not last: Peter Lombard only mentioned Caiaphas and Balaam. Cf. the Introduction, p. 17 n. 66.

²³ The *Glossa*, for instance, issues a warning: if Balaam's ass or Caiaphas could prophesy without fully knowing the future, no one should be praised simply for being a prophet: i, p. 332. There was also recognition that many scriptural prophets (e.g. Jeremiah and Amos) had not performed miracles. Petrus Alphonsi argued that they did not need to provide miracles because they did not introduce novelties of law or teaching and their predictions were fulfilled: *Dialogus*, col. 600.

²⁴ *Contra sectam* II.133–4, pp. 200–2.

²⁵ *Contra sectam* II.133, p. 200; II.137, p. 206: 'Non fuit igitur Mahumetus vester ut dicitis "signaculum prophetarum," hoc est ultimus in prophetis, sed Iohannes baptista'. Cf. the thirteenth-century Dominican Ramon Martí's rejection of claims that Christ's prediction of the Paraclete referred to Muhammad rather than the Holy Spirit: *De seta [sic] Machometi*, ed. J. Hernando, *Acta historica et archaeologica medievalea*, 4 (1983), p. 26.

²⁶ *Contra sectam* II.138, p. 208.

²⁷ *Contra sectam* II.134, p. 202.

²⁸ *Contra sectam* II.138, p. 208.

²⁹ *Contra sectam* II.141, p. 210: 'Particularis vero aut personalis et ante Iohannem et post multis datus est et adhuc fortasse pluribus dandus'.

cites none of his contemporaries; he admits only *fortasse*.³⁰ But Peter's polemical categories significantly gesture towards a distinction based on sacred history, while acknowledging how difficult it is to clarify prophecy after Christ.

Peter's efforts were directed against what he believed was the latest manifestation in a long line of heresies.³¹ The polemical approach encouraged confirmation via miracles and attacks against pseudo-prophets, but even these measures appeared insufficient, so Peter attempted to place prophets in definitive historical categories. Even more difficult would be the task that later theologians would undertake, the discernment of prophetic claims within the Church, claims made for particular prophesies, as well as for the elevation of *particularia* into *universalia*. To better understand these internal debates, I introduce one further area of prophetic reflection, namely preaching, that became particularly important—especially for Dominicans—at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

II. PROPHETIC PREACHING

When Peter the Chanter (d.1197), a master of theology at Paris, defined the theological training required of clerics treating Scripture, he proposed three areas: lecturing (*lectio*), disputing (*disputatio*), and preaching (*predicatio*).³² The intellectual nature of lecturing and disputing fitted well with the emphasis on prophecy as wise understanding documented in the previous chapter, but the Chanter's inclusion of preaching was just as significant, a sign of the coming 'homiletic revolution', the reinvigoration of preaching on a theoretical and practical level that emerged in the first decades of the thirteenth century, due in large part to its association with the *vita apostolica* and to its promotion by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215).³³ In particular, this period saw the rise of 'thematic preaching',

³⁰ Cf. the less cautious Riccoldo, who rejects Muhammad's claim to be the 'seal' not because universal prophecy has ceased but because no one can claim to put a stop to the breadth of prophecy: 'But could the hand of God really be cut off because it could not give the spirit of prophecy (*spiritus prophete*) after Muhammad? Indeed, not only Christians and Jews, but even Saracens say that among them there were many after him who had the spirit of prophecy'; *Contra legem* IX, p. 100.

³¹ Torrell, *Recherches*, p. 98.

³² *Verbum abbreviatum*, ed. M. Boutry, CCCM 196 (Turnhout, 2004) I.1, p. 9.

³³ J. J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages* (London, 1974), p. 310. After Augustine's *De doct.* (in 426), there were no treatises on preaching before the year 1200, except for those of Guibert of Nogent and Alan of Lille in the late twelfth century: P. B. Roberts, 'The *Ars praedicandi* and the Medieval Sermon', in C. Muessig (ed.), *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 41, 47. On preaching and the apostolic life, see D. d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300*

instruction in the meaning of Scripture which was closely linked to exegesis and which came to be seen as an essential tool in the education of popular audiences and in the struggle against heresy.³⁴ The rise of preaching also, however, added further elements to prophecy's multivalence.

When Thomas of Chobham, who studied under Peter the Chanter, composed his *Summa de arte praedicandi* (c.1220), he confirmed preaching's relationship to prophecy: 'preaching is sometimes called prophecy'.³⁵ Thomas recognizes the ambiguous relationship in Latin between *predicare* and *predicere*, but he clarifies that he is not speaking of predictive prophecy: 'In another way, to prophesy is to predict the future (*predicere*), which we do not have in mind here'.³⁶ Rather, he means explaining God's word to the people (*ad populum exponere*), and therefore 'to prophesy is to preach'—'prophetare est predicare'.³⁷ Why raise here this equation with prophecy, in a treatise for the general use of preachers? Thomas certainly wants to connect preaching to a noble lineage, but he wants more than that; he wants to show how preaching is the use of a divine gift, not reserved for special cases. He insists that preaching is fully consistent with the tradition of prophecy outlined in 1 Corinthians, as a form of spiritual guidance for the Church. Preaching, Thomas says, requires understanding and is thus better than speaking in tongues, an act he equates with priests reading Scripture in church without understanding it.³⁸ Thomas is promoting clerical education, but he also takes seriously the notion of preaching as a 'prophetic' act, as a real manifestation of the social and rhetorical model outlined by Paul for the apostolic age.³⁹

His claims do not emerge *ex nihilo*: Gregory the Great, as we have seen, had explicitly linked preaching to the Pauline gifts of the Spirit,⁴⁰ and

(Oxford, 1985), pp. 43ff. Lateran IV promoted preaching in canon 10: *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta*, ed. G. Alberigo (Basel, 1962), p. 215. Preaching was central not only to the Dominicans but also to the Franciscans, each of whom Jacques de Vitry called by the same name in the early thirteenth century, 'Order of Preachers': *Historia occidentalis*, ed. J. F. Hinnebusch (Fribourg, 1972), 32, p. 158.

³⁴ Roberts, 'Ars praedicandi', pp. 45, 50.

³⁵ *Summa de arte praedicandi*, ed. F. Morenzoni, CCCM 82 (Turnhout, 1988) I, p. 17: 'Dicitur etiam predicatio quandoque prophetia'. Thomas opens his first chapter (p. 15) with the Chanter's definition of theology.

³⁶ *De arte praedicandi* I, p. 17: 'Alio modo dicitur prophetare futura predicere, de quo hic non intendimus'.

³⁷ *De arte praedicandi* I, p. 17.

³⁸ *De arte praedicandi* I, p. 17: 'clerici legunt Epistolas et Evangelium in ecclesiis qui non intelligunt quod dicunt'. Cf. 1 Cor. 14:5.

³⁹ G. R. Evans notes that Thomas's work is one of the earliest to place preaching among the branches of rhetoric, and that it contributed to the view that 'preaching is the highest form of Biblical exegesis': 'Thomas of Chobham on Preaching and Exegesis', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 52 (1985), p. 159.

⁴⁰ See the Introduction, p. 15.

more recently Bernard of Clairvaux had affirmed that 'holy preachers are profitably called prophets', because they contemplate divine mysteries and seek to heal and correct human behaviour.⁴¹ One view of such language is to see it as purely metaphoric: the drawing from Scripture of comparisons with the present. Such a view has some applicability, but it ultimately impoverishes the significance of inspiration, considering the extensive theoretical explanations for and debates about prophecy that theologians engaged in (and which the rest of this chapter and the next examine).⁴² A metaphorical explanation downplays the extent to which scriptural typologies were seen as describing present realities, especially for a Church grounded on historical continuity with the past. The Pauline prophetic model described prophetic preaching as a genuine gift in the contemporary Church. The association of preaching with prophecy is not mere metaphor in the thirteenth century. Thus when, for instance, the Franciscan preacher Gilbert of Tournai stated in 1255 that clerics 'had the duty to prophesy', this was part of an attempt to claim spiritual authority, and it was also a way of stating that preaching was broadly prophetic, that is, an inspired activity of spiritual exposition and guidance.⁴³ Indeed, the point is precisely that the uncertain line between inspired activity and metaphoric usage created problems that needed resolution.⁴⁴

Even with the growing importance and independence of speculative theology, preaching was not marginalized: intellectual and moral theology remained linked. The distinction between classroom and pulpit was not a firm one, since clerics found themselves in both, and indeed saw the first as preparation for the second.⁴⁵ This is particularly true as the mendicant

⁴¹ *Sermones de diversis*, 95.1, p. 353: 'Propheta interpretatur Videns. Et sancti praedicatores non ab re prophetiae appellantur, qui et arcana mysteriorum Dei contemplantur et, prout vident mores hominum, adhibent modos curationum'.

⁴² Here I disagree with Nicole Bériou's interpretation: N. Bériou, 'Saint François, premier prophète de son ordre, dans les sermons du XIII^e siècle', *MEFRMA*, 102 (1990), p. 548.

⁴³ *Sermo de sancto Francisco*, ed. Bériou, in 'Saint François', p. 555: 'clerici quorum esset officium prophetare et videre'. Gilbert drew on 1 Kgs 9:9 to argue that the cleric sees further than others, not in terms of the future, but in terms of understanding divine teaching so as to lead others to salvation.

⁴⁴ Cf. Constable's claim, when examining imitations of Christ, that the distinction between allegory and reality blurred in the thirteenth century: G. Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 213.

⁴⁵ J.-P. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. R. Royal, i (Washington, DC, 1996), pp. 69–70; Rouse and Rouse, 'Statim invenire', pp. 218–19. Even during late thirteenth-century debates about the relative superiority of academic theology over pastoral care, preaching was nonetheless still viewed as drawing its resources from theological teaching. See E. Marmursztejn, *L'Autorité des maîtres* (Paris, 2007), pp. 52–3, and the quodlibets discussed by J. Leclercq, 'L'idéal du théologien au moyen âge: Textes inédits', *Revue des sciences religieuses*, 21 (1947), pp. 122–5.

orders began to dominate university positions and became authors of the burgeoning genre of *artes praedicandi*.⁴⁶ Thus, the application of the label 'prophetic' to preaching suggested a spectrum of inspiration, at least in clerical activities. This prophecy was both an expansion and a contraction. It drew upon the *spiritus intelligentiae*, the exegetical gift, and was thus an important form of inspiration. It was not, however, due to extraordinary insight into human hearts, nor, as Rupert of Deutz's gifts had been, due to contemplative or rapturous visions, nor like Hugh of St Victor's understanding of sacred history. Instead, homiletic prophecy was a modest gift of education and of exhortation, potentially available to all who took part in the task on behalf of the Church.⁴⁷

Yet, there were dangers in promoting preaching as a prophetic mode, since the Church often struggled to determine who exactly *should* partake in that activity, and what the sources of homiletic authority were. The spheres of priest and preacher overlapped, but they were not identical. Norbert of Xanten (d. 1134) could defend his life as a wandering preacher by stating that he had not usurped the 'office of preacher' (*officium praedicationis*) because 'the power to preach is given to us at the reception of the priesthood'.⁴⁸ But Hildegard of Bingen's preaching tours across Europe in the 1160s were justified by her special inspiration.⁴⁹ By the end of the twelfth century, lay preachers proclaiming the *vita apostolica* made clerics wary. The Waldensians, for instance, were a lay group that asserted an apostolic right to interpret Scripture and to preach.⁵⁰ In response, the French Premonstratensian abbot Bernard of Fontcaude (d. c. 1192) acknowledged the prophetic nature of preaching, that is, expounding 'the mysteries of the word of God', but he denied that this gift of prophecy was given to all as the Waldensians claimed.⁵¹ For Bernard, extraordinary

⁴⁶ M. Briscoe, *Artes praedicandi* (Turnhout, 1992), pp. 28–30. Requirements for preaching are found in, e.g., the statutes of Oxford for 1253, 1303, and 1314: *Statuta antiqua Universitatis Oxoniensis*, ed. S. Gibson (Oxford, 1931), pp. 50–3, 116–18.

⁴⁷ Overlooking the potentially wide-ranging implications of this development, Vauchez argues that such homiletic prophecy was a 'reductive version' of the traditional understanding of prophecy: *Saints*, p. 121.

⁴⁸ *Vita Norberti Archiepiscopi Magdeburgensis*, ed. R. Wilmans, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores 12 (Hanover, 1856), 4, 12.673; trans., T. J. Antry and C. Neel, in *Norbert and Early Norbertine Spirituality* (New York, 2007), p. 129: 'Potestas autem praedicandi data est nobis ex susceptione sacerdotii'.

⁴⁹ A. J. Minnis, 'Religious Roles: Public and Private', in A. J. Minnis and R. Voaden (eds), *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition c. 1100–c. 1500* (Turnhout, 2010), p. 53.

⁵⁰ E. Cameron, *Waldenses* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 23–48.

⁵¹ *Liber adversus Waldensium sectam* IV.12, PL 204.808: 'prophetantibus, id est exponen-tibus mysteria verbi Dei'; col. 809: 'prophetia omnibus data non est'. Indeed, when it came to women, Bernard denied that prophecy was even the same as teaching: citing the example of Anna (Luke 2:36), he said that she was 'speaking about Christ, confessing, that is praising or prophesying, not teaching' ('laudando vel prophetando, non docendo') (col. 827).

laymen were only allowed to preach if they were virtuous, sent by God (which could be attested by miracles), and permitted by their bishops, but these were exceptions.⁵²

Innocent III eventually allowed a lay group known as the Humiliati to preach among themselves, so long as they avoided doctrinal questions and focused on moral exhortation.⁵³ At the same time, Innocent recognized that some people might allege special inspiration. His 1199 letter to the clergy of Metz (incorporated into canon law in the 1230s) insisted that no one gained the right to preach simply by claiming to be sent by God, since any heretic could do so. Despite his concerns about miracles in canonization procedures, Innocent argued here that miracles or the testimony of Scripture were necessary to confirm such claims.⁵⁴ Thus, despite its attendant weaknesses, Peter the Venerable's introduction of the miracle test for prophecy would continue to be invoked to ward off challenges. The test never proved sufficient in offering clear identification of the prophetic gift, but it returned as a marker of the difficulties of constraining prophecy when it was expanded to include preaching. Indeed, the promotion of preaching at Lateran IV was a double-edged sword: even as it established certain barriers against heresy, it expanded the possibilities for prophetic authority.

For Dominicans especially, as an order formed in this milieu, sorting out the various strands of prophetic experience was crucial for establishing the parameters of their mission as preachers. The Dominicans were new in placing preaching—free from episcopal control—at the heart of the order's identity, and from the beginning they connected study with homiletics more firmly than Franciscans did.⁵⁵ In particular, as Dominicans

⁵² *Adversus Waldensium*, col. 811–12.

⁵³ B. Bolton, 'Innocent III's Treatment of the Humiliati', *Studies in Church History*, 8 (1972), p. 77. This distinction between 'private exhortation...allowed to all, and public preaching...reserved for the clergy alone' came to define the treatment of lay preaching: Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, trans. M. Schneider (Notre Dame, IN, 1993), p. 64.

⁵⁴ *Cum ex iniuncto*, in *Die Register Innocenz' III*, ed. O. Hagender, ii (Graz, 1964), pp. 271–3: 'it is not sufficient for anyone merely to assert baldly that he has been sent from God (*missus a Deo*), since any heretic (*haereticus*) could assert this, but he must demonstrate that invisible sending (*invisibilis missio*) through the working of a miracle (*per operationem miraculi*) or through the special testimony of Scripture'. For Innocent's uncertainty about miracles, see p. 92.

⁵⁵ On the novelty of preaching as central to a religious order, see S. Tugwell (ed.), *Early Dominicans: Selected Writings* (Mahwah, NJ, 1982), pp. 181–2. Dominic's desire to liberate the preaching office from episcopal oversight was also new: A. Boureau, 'Vitaie fratrum, Vitaie Patrum: L'ordre dominicain et le modèle des Pères du désert au XIII^e siècle', *MEFRMA*, 99 (1987), p. 97. For early Dominican views on preaching and study, see V. Koudelka, *Dominic*, trans. C. Fissler and S. Tugwell (London, 1997), pp. 40–3, 152–8.

promoted preaching, they had to confront one of the tensions evident in defences of preaching authority: the role of personal virtue in authorizing the preacher's words. Humbert of Romans (c.1200–1277), the Paris-educated Master of the Dominican Order after 1254, articulated this tension in his *Liber de eruditione praedicatorum* (composed after 1263).⁵⁶ Unlike his contemporaries, Humbert shows concern more for the character of the preacher than for the form of the sermon, and he draws on passages from discussions of prophecy—1 Corinthians and Gregory the Great's *Homilies on Ezekiel*—to stress that preaching is a gift of the Holy Spirit (through both understanding and eloquence), given not for personal merit but for the building up of the Church: the 'grace of preaching is had only by God's special gift'.⁵⁷ It is an art (*ars*) that only the Holy Spirit can truly teach, the practitioners of which God will continually send until the end of time.⁵⁸

But, if this is the case, and if preaching appears very much like prophecy here, it also resembles the prudential and civil art of oratory. Preaching, for Humbert, helps the Church because 'a city without it' makes 'rational men disappear' so that, as a result, 'almost nobody can be found except men who are no better than animals'.⁵⁹ The prudence of preachers (*prudencia praedicatorum*) restores civic harmony.⁶⁰ Humbert sounds like ancient theorists of rhetoric and poetry. For Cicero and Quintilian, rhetoric was what civilized humanity, while for Horace, it was the *vates* (and Orpheus in particular) who brought people out of the forests through the power of his sweet music.⁶¹ In classical formulations, the prudence of the orator helped him guide others, just as Humbert insists for the *prudencia praedicatorum*. Thus, for Quintilian it was essential that virtue

On early Franciscan uncertainty about education, see N. Şenocak, *The Poor and the Perfect: The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order* (Ithaca, NY, 2012).

⁵⁶ Tugwell, *Early Dominicans*, pp. 32–4.

⁵⁷ *De eruditione religiosorum praedicatorum*, ed. J. Berthier, in *Opera de vita regulari*, ii (Rome, 1889), 5, 7, pp. 385–6, 393: 'Gratia vero praedicandi ex dono Dei speciali habetur'; trans. Tugwell, in *Early Dominicans*, pp. 195–6, 204. Though Tugwell (*Early Dominicans*, p. 181) argues that Humbert's focus on character was unpopular in comparison to other manuals' emphasis on composition, this does not mean his ideas were neglected, just unsuitable for practical help. As I show below, Humbert's concern to combine virtue and eloquence in preaching was not unusual.

⁵⁸ *De eruditione*, 3, 7, pp. 380, 393. Cf. Augustine, *De doct.* IV.15.32.

⁵⁹ *De eruditione*, 3, p. 379; trans., p. 188: 'ex defectu praedicationis pereunt homines rationales . . . et quasi soli bestiales inveniuntur'.

⁶⁰ *De eruditione*, 3, p. 379. Humbert draws on Eccles. 10:3: 'Civitates inhabitantur per sensum prudentium'. The *Glossa* (ii, p. 754), which Humbert cites, refers these words to preachers.

⁶¹ Cicero, *De inventione*, ed. and trans. H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge, MA 1976) I.2.2–3; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, ed. M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1970) II.16.9; Horace, *Ars poetica*, ed. E. C. Wickham and H. W. Garrod, in *Opera*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1901), II. 396–401.

and eloquence be united to create the 'good man skilled in speaking' (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*) and to establish his trustworthiness and authority; the primary virtue Quintilian required was prudence.⁶² For Humbert, prudence was the intellectual virtue that guided moral action (and was thus a link between speculative and moral theology).⁶³ As a result, 'Goodness of life is necessary for every preacher'.⁶⁴

Dependent on human talent, virtue, and inspiration, preaching thus occupied a place somewhere between spiritual elevation and earthly cultivation. Even if Humbert believed that virtue and the gift of grace were crucial, he still insisted that a preacher cultivate his talents through education: 'a sensible preacher still ought to do what he can to ensure that his preaching is commendable, by carefully studying what he has to preach'.⁶⁵ Franciscans were less likely to agree because of their founder's example.⁶⁶ But for Humbert, preaching was a gift of the Spirit that was nevertheless dependent on prudence, morals, and education.⁶⁷

Yet describing preaching as contemporary prophecy raised the same problems Peter the Venerable had faced. If preaching, like prophecy, was a gift for building up the Church, could preachers, like prophets, fulfil that purpose regardless of their sanctity? On the one hand, the early thirteenth-century English Augustinian canon Alexander of Ashby (d. c.1214) expressed succinctly a common belief relevant to the issue: 'I think that

⁶² *Institutio oratoria* XII.1.1. Cf. Cicero, *De oratore*, ed. E. W. Sutton (Cambridge, MA, 1988) III.55.212. For patristic transmission of these ideas to the Middle Ages, see M. S. Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400–1500* (Manchester, 2011), pp. 464–5.

⁶³ Philip the Chancellor's *Summa de bono* helped establish this link: R. E. Houser, introduction in *The Cardinal Virtues* (Toronto, 2004), p. 54.

⁶⁴ *De eruditione*, 8, p. 399; trans., p. 215: 'omni praedicatori necessaria est bona vita'. Humbert cites Gregory, *In Hiez.* X.13.

⁶⁵ *De eruditione*, 7, p. 394; trans., p. 205: 'sapiens praedicator debet facere quod in se est, diligenter studendo circa praedicationem faciendam'.

⁶⁶ Francis claimed he was called to preach precisely because of his foolishness (and sinfulness): *Actus beati Francisci*, ed. M. Bigaroni and G. Boccali (Assisi, 1988), 10, pp. 194–6. The idea that sanctity was more important than education for preaching God's word can be found in numerous authors, including Eustace of Arras, OFM, in a quodlibet (c.1263–6) cited by J. Leclercq, 'Le magistère', p. 119. Interestingly, Eustace concludes that nothing, then, should prevent a woman from preaching, 'si... sit vitae puritas'.

⁶⁷ The sermons of Guy d'Évreux (fl.1290s) are but one example of how Dominican preachers applied Humbert's ideas. For instance, the text of Isaiah's exhortation to the people to follow him (Isa. 2:3) occasions a list of the three things necessary for preachers: courtesy, eloquence, and goodness of life, for because of that goodness God reveals his mysteries ('revelat deus misteria'). See Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 225, fol. 77v. Furthermore, he says, those who wish to save souls as preachers must ascend the mountain like Isaiah to contemplate God ('ad deum speculandum'): Oxford, Lincoln College, MS lat. 113, fol. 74r.

only they purely and rightly understand sacred Scripture, who through the purity of their life (*mundicia vite*) adhere to that spirit (*spiritus*) by which the Scriptures were composed and expounded'.⁶⁸ Dominic himself had promoted the connection between virtue and preaching within the Church to combat the moral zeal of heretical groups like the Cathars and Waldensians, a zeal which had confirmed for many their right to preach.⁶⁹ Many mendicants thus followed Humbert and insisted that preaching required virtue. The Dominican theologian Thomas of Cantimpré, for example, related (c.1263) how Innocent III, in granting permission to Dominic to establish a new order devoted to preaching, used not the participle 'praedicans' but the rare term 'praedicator', a term which indicated someone with an inner habit (*habitus*) rather than someone merely engaged in an exterior act (*actus*) of preaching.⁷⁰ On the other hand, audiences could not always discern this inner habit so as to distinguish virtuous preachers from wicked ones.⁷¹ And even a wicked preacher could, like the *mali prophetae*, be permitted to do God's will.⁷²

Alexander Murray has argued that the sacramental line in the twelfth century between cleric and lay was re-established in the thirteenth on the new criterion of intellect, and he cites the elevation of preaching over sacramental functions as 'intellectual categories impos[ing] themselves on sacramental' ones.⁷³ Nonetheless, preaching—with its prophetic elements—did not automatically contribute to this alleged construction of hierarchical distinctions between learned and unlearned. The ambiguity of the 'inspired' aspects of preaching meant it was not strictly intellectual: a learned preacher was still an incomplete preacher. Thus, the very nature of the Dominican Order gave rise to the same questions theorists asked about prophecy. What was the difference between special inspiration and the usual presence of the

⁶⁸ *Brevissima comprehensio historiarum*, ed. G. Dinkova-Bruun, CCCM 188a (Turnhout, 2004), prol., p. 11: 'Solos enim illos arbitror pure et recte intelligere sacras scripturas, qui per mundiciam vite illi adherent spiritui, quo sacre composite sunt et expositae'.

⁶⁹ Koudelka, *Dominic*, p. 23.

⁷⁰ *Bonum universale de apibus* (Douai, 1597), pp. 31–2. Cf. the English Franciscan Thomas Docking, who wrote (c.1260): 'It is better to evangelize than to baptize... And the reason is that the ministry of preaching (*ministerium praedicationis*) happens not only according to external act (*actus exterior*), but according to inner habit (*habitus interior*): cited by Leclercq, 'Le magistère', p. 117. *Habitus*, a permanent quality of one's faculties and the basis for virtue, was often viewed as connected to 'the Spirit's formation of sanctity within a person': C. Ocker, *Biblical Poetics Before Humanism and Reformation* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 159.

⁷¹ Jacques de Vitry, e.g., warned against the harm caused by false friars' preaching: *Historia occidentalis* X, pp. 103–6.

⁷² Stories of demons being allowed to preach the truth of the Gospel because real clergy were derelict could be found in various collections of *exempla*, e.g. in Jacques de Vitry's *Historia occidentalis* V, and Stephen of Bourbon's *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus*, ed. A. Lecoy (Paris, 1877) I.45.

⁷³ A. Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 265–6.

Holy Spirit in the Church? What was the relationship between inspiration on the one hand and understanding, contemplation, or virtue on the other? What authority derived from this inspiration? I turn now to examine the initial attempts of Dominican theologians to resolve these questions, even as their efforts continued to yield complex results.

III. *QUID SIT PROPHEZIA*? EARLY DOMINICAN TREATISES

Dominican assessment of prophecy as a distinct phenomenon began in earnest with Humbert of Romans' contemporary, Hugh of St Cher, in a *quaestio* treatise laying out formalized arguments on the topic of *prophetia*. Hugh was explicitly concerned about misuses of prophecy, but what is more significant is how those concerns conflict with descriptions in his own exegetical work, the *Postilla super totam bibliam*. This conflict was very likely caused by divergent assessments of prophecy within the circle of Dominicans working under Hugh.⁷⁴ Like Peter the Venerable, Hugh's *quaestio* on prophecy accepts Gregory the Great's statement that prophecy reveals past, present, and future things ('sive preteritorum sive presentium sive futurorum'); Hugh notes, however, that it is mainly about the future.⁷⁵ This connection to the future is problematic, however. Prophecy, Hugh says, is not the same as prediction (*predictio futuri*), which can be about evil things. True prophecy cannot predict evil, however, because prophecy must be 'pre-ordained' (*preordinati*) by God, and evil is not part of the *preordinatio Dei*.⁷⁶ Hugh does not elaborate on what he means by *predictio*, but he comes to the same conclusion as Peter the Venerable: prophecy must fit into *sacra historia*.

While not explicitly distinguishing between universal and particular prophecy, Hugh, even more than Peter, is evidently concerned by the broadening stream of prophetic inspiration in the present day. Hugh's *quaestio* and his *postilla* on 1 Corinthians agree on this, though they differ in their approaches to identifying the problem. In the *postilla*, Hugh accepts the connection between prophecy and exegetical insight, since

⁷⁴ Torrell's discussion of Hugh in *Théorie de la prophétie et philosophie de la connaissance aux environs de 1230* (Leuven, 1977), does not address this issue because he does not examine the *Postilla*. On the collaborative nature of Hugh's writings, see Ch. 2, p. 67 n. 79.

⁷⁵ *Quaestio de prophetia*, ed. J.-P. Torrell, in *Théorie*, p. 16: 'the revelation of things which are far, that is, as if of future things' ('revelatio eorum que procul sunt, id est futurorum tantum'). Cf. Hugh on 1 Kgs 9:9, *Postilla super totam bibliam* (Basel, 1498–1502), I, p. K5v: 'Videns dicitur propheta, quia per spiritum praenoscit futura'.

⁷⁶ *De prophetia*, p. 43.

1 Corinthians shows him that prophecy can mean either prediction or explanation of the Scriptures.⁷⁷ What he rejects is any attempt to equate scriptural and philosophical knowledge, as if *any* clerical *lectio*, secular or sacred, counted as prophetic: '*let them prophesy*', that is, let them expound sacred Scripture . . . not the words of Aristotle'.⁷⁸ Similarly, Hugh explains that the early Church (*primitiva ecclesia*) had numerous problems with the kind of prophecy Paul describes: many people had both the gift of tongues and of prophecy and used them whenever they wanted, which created great 'confusion' (*confusio*) because no one understood anyone else.⁷⁹ This Babel revealed that a new dispensation was required, in which no one should preach (*praedicare*) unless explicitly sent.⁸⁰

The *postilla*'s restriction of contemporary prophecy only to certain preachers, however, does not go far enough for the *quaestio*, which explicitly insists that preaching and exegesis should *not* be equated with prophecy. Going against the grain of previous theological reflection, the *quaestio* states that, though prophecy must pronounce to people the will of God, 'expositors are not properly prophets', because prophets are those who see the future.⁸¹ This focus on prophecy as foreseeing helps Hugh, in the *quaestio*, to decouple prophecy from contemporary clerical activities altogether, a process strengthened by the *quaestio*'s clear delineation between divine gift and the cultivation of human talents. Joseph, he says, foresaw and predicted future things without *any* input from his own talent (*ingenium*).⁸² This, for Hugh, rules out the *patres* as part of the prophetic (and scriptural) tradition: Augustine, for instance, cannot properly be considered a prophet, since he understood the words of the prophets not only through the Holy Spirit but also through his own ability (*ingenium*).⁸³ Ezekiel differs from his interpreter, Gregory the Great, because Ezekiel not only saw the vision, but he received understanding from the Spirit for prediction (*ad predicendum*). Scriptural prophets are a breed apart.

⁷⁷ *Postilla*, vii, p. r3r (1 Cor. 12:10): 'ad providendum futura, vel ad exponendum scripturas'. Cf. p. C6v, on Eph. 4:11: prophets are 'explanatores scripturarum'.

⁷⁸ *Postilla*, vii, p. r5v (1 Cor. 14:24): '*prophetent*, id est, exponant sacram scripturam . . . non [verba] aristotelis'. On thirteenth-century debates over Aristotle's place in higher learning, see F. van Steenberghen, *Aristotle in the West*, trans. L. Johnston (Louvain, 1970), pp. 66ff.

⁷⁹ *Postilla*, vii, p. r5v (1 Cor. 14:26).

⁸⁰ *Postilla*, vii, p. r5v.

⁸¹ *De prophetia*, p. 54: 'expositores proprie non sunt prophetae'. The opposite claim is made, for instance, by Alexander of Ashby, *Brevissima*, prol., p. 9: 'all Catholic expositors, as theologians assert, speak with the same Spirit by which the prophets spoke' ('omnes catholici expositores, sicut theologi asserunt, eodem spiritu loquuntur quo prophete locuti sunt').

⁸² *De prophetia*, p. 54: 'sine cooperatione sui ingenii'.

⁸³ *De prophetia*, p. 54: 'ingenio suo cooperante et Spiritu Sancto docente.'

The contrast between Hugh of St Cher's two treatments of prophecy is highly revealing of the uncertainty surrounding contemporary inspiration. The unstable canon of Scripture, with which Hugh of St Victor was wrestling, was part of the problem.⁸⁴ In Hugh of St Cher's time, masters at Paris were obliged to give inaugural lectures on the structure and authoritative status of the biblical books, part of continuing attempts to establish firm canonical boundaries.⁸⁵ Despite these attempts, confusions lingered into the fourteenth century about how to speak of the canon: a quodlibet (c.1312) of the canon regular John of Mont-Saint-Éloi states that 'Sacra Scriptura' refers sometimes to what is found in the Bible and in the glosses of saints, and, sometimes to Church decretals.⁸⁶ Potential inspiration, furthermore, was not limited to the patristic period. The writings of contemporary prophets such as Hildegard of Bingen had already begun to come under consideration for sacred status.⁸⁷ Hugh of St Cher's *postilla* expresses explicit unease with secondary prophetic roles being granted to contemporary women: there were female prophets in the Old Testament, Hugh says, not because they expounded Scripture, but because they either 'predicted the future or praised God' (*futura predicere vel laudare*).⁸⁸ This Old Testament prophetic role cannot, in his opinion, be transferred to the present.⁸⁹

Hugh's aversion to current-day inspiration in both the *postilla* on 1 Corinthians and the *quaestio*, however, is primarily a general concern with broad or secondary prophecy rather than a specific critique of women.

⁸⁴ See Ch. 1, pp. 36ff.

⁸⁵ F. Santi, 'L'esegesi biblica di Tommaso d'Aquino nel contesto dell'esegesi biblica medievale', *Angelicum*, 71 (1994), pp. 514–15.

⁸⁶ Cited in Leclercq, 'L'idéal du théologien', p. 125: 'per Sacram Scripturam aliquando intelligimus quod continetur in biblia et in glossis sanctorum, aliquando intelligimus decreta et decretales'. Yves Congar points out that Aquinas tried to clarify the categories used to speak of the canon (e.g., in *ST I* 1.a8.ad2), but that his influence in this was limited and therefore a 'lack of precision pervades most of the theological work of the time': Y. Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, trans. M. Naseby and T. Rainborough (London, 1966), p. 93.

⁸⁷ Long after her death, Hildegard's reputation still presented a challenge to the boundaries of both the canon and teaching authority, as is clear from the *vita* of St Gerlach (c.1225): 'Although not learned in literature (*nullis litteris*) except for the Psalms of David, Hildegard produced great volumes, instructed (*edocta*) by the Holy Spirit about the divine oracles (*oracula*) and mysteries (*sacramenta*) revealed to her, which were canonized (*canonizata*) by Pope Eugene through the mediation of St Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, and counted among holy writings (*inter sacras scripturas*)'. See *Vita Gerlaci eremitae in Belgio*, Acta Sanctorum (Paris, 1863–) Jan. I, p. 309. The phrase 'inter sacras scripturas' does not appear in Eugene's original letter to Hildegard, which is Ep. 1 in her *Liber epistolarum*, PL 197.145.

⁸⁸ *Postilla*, vii, p. r5v (1 Cor. 14:34).

⁸⁹ For prophecy as a justification for the teaching authority of other contemporary holy women, see A. J. Minnis, *Fallible Authors: Chaucer's Pardoner and Wife of Bath* (Philadelphia, PA, 2008), pp. 195–200.

Indeed, Hugh directs his attacks more frequently at those who sought to claim their intellectual work was prophetic. Unlike Peter Lombard, Hugh explicitly insists that philosophical vision is different from rapturous vision: Paul's elevation to the third heaven could only happen because of love (*dilectio*), which does not occur with philosophical speculation.⁹⁰

Though prophecy might be more akin to contemplation than philosophy, even contemplation does not create prophets. In this regard, Hugh actually seems to be the first theorist to try to undermine the link between visions and virtue.⁹¹ Responding to an objection that prophecy is a virtue (*virtus*), which is dependent on one's moral character, Hugh asserts that prophecy is neither knowledge (*scientia*) nor virtue, nor even habit (*habitus*), but rather an unstable act (*actus*) preceded by two *passiones*, the apparition and the revelation.⁹² Hugh is trying, in effect, to distinguish gift from virtue. Prophecy, he admits, can be lost because of bad behaviour, but only because this makes one less open to receiving prophetic passions.⁹³ In the relationship between virtue and vision, Hugh does not want to establish contemporary saints as prophets, nor does he wish for virtuous preachers to claim the prophetic mantle.⁹⁴

Hugh of St Cher was clearly wrestling with a number of issues, and his lack of resolution is even more apparent when considering Albert the Great, who began teaching at Paris in 1245 and who offers a quite different perspective on prophetic inspiration. Albert's primary concern was not preaching or exegesis, but rather the relationship between natural and supernatural prophecy. This is not surprising considering Albert's great interest in scientific observation, especially astrology.⁹⁵ The extent to

⁹⁰ *Postilla*, vii, p. y4 (2 Cor. 12:2): 'philosophi non fuerunt rapti usque ad tertium caelum'. He is refuting those who point out that philosophers also have a type of vision that sees invisible things (citing Rom. 1:20). Cf. Ch. 2, pp. 80–1.

⁹¹ Torrell, *Recherches*, pp. 257–8.

⁹² *De prophetia*, pp. 4–5, 11–12. Torrell argues that Hugh is subordinating prophecy to the *habitus* of faith: *Recherches*, p. 5.

⁹³ *De prophetia*, pp. 14, 52. Hugh does not follow this precept with complete regularity, however: Caiaphas' words were in one way proper prophecy, but, in another way, his bad intentions make him an improper prophet (p. 43).

⁹⁴ An anonymous treatise on prophecy from the 1230s encapsulated similar concerns by comparing the different ways of knowing used by philosophers, prophets, contemplatives, and the general faithful. They all have visions, the author writes, but they differ in how they receive them: philosophers' visions are mediated 'per ratiocinationem' and 'per imaginem creature'; prophets' visions 'per imaginationem et revelationem'; contemplatives 'per regustationem'; and the faithful's 'per speculum enigmaticum'; cited by Torrell, *Théorie*, p. 256 n. 16.

⁹⁵ Albert's *De fato* and the *Speculum astronomiae* attributed to him both lay out the benefits of astrology: P. Zambelli, *The Speculum astronomiae and its Enigma: Astrology, Theology, and Science in Albertus Magnus and his Contemporaries* (London, 1992), pp. xi, 6–7.

which time itself could be ordered and understood clearly preoccupied him. In his commentary on Aristotle's *De somno et vigilia* (after 1257), Albert lists thirteen ways in which the soul of either a sleeper or a fore-seer (*praevidens*) can receive impressions.⁹⁶ The first seven occur within dreams, and the next four happen when awake but with senses closed to the outside world (including auguries and insanities).⁹⁷ The final two grades are prophetic 'among the philosophers' ('prophetia apud philosophos'): when one sees images of the future, and when hidden (*occulta*) future goods are preconceived (*praeconcepit*) through heavenly instinct (*per coelestium instinctum*).⁹⁸ This prophetic philosophy, since it is natural, is determined by the moral virtue that the philosopher exhibits: the inability to control one's passions prevents inspiration.⁹⁹

This is the sort of elevation of philosophy that Hugh of St Cher resisted, and, judged in this context, it is all the more startling that Albert does not condemn it. Albert does insist, though, that predictive philosophical prophecy—whether astrological or meditative—is not divine inspiration. Thus, he says, the thirteen natural types of prophecy he lists are not the prophetic types that theology speaks about, which cannot be understood from physical causes.¹⁰⁰ Theological prophecy does not deal with attempts to determine the *necessity* of future events or predict eclipses.¹⁰¹ Rather, as Albert lays out in his *quaestio* on prophecy (c. 1245–8), divine inspiration is the only way one could know future contingents.¹⁰² Albert does not reject astrology, but he is worried about dreams inspired by a demonic spirit (*spiritus daemoniacus*), as well as empty mathematical conjectures (*coniecturae vanae mathematicae*).¹⁰³ Albert explicitly contrasts human

⁹⁶ *De somno et vigilia*, Borgnet 9, III.1.10, p. 190. These questions also bear the mark of engagement with Avicenna, who accepted natural prophecy: see D. N. Hasse, *Avicenna's De anima in the Latin West* (London, 2000), pp. 154–74.

⁹⁷ *De somno* III.1.10, pp. 190ff.

⁹⁸ *De somno* III.1.10, 12, pp. 192–3, 195. Cf. Peter of Poitiers on astrology, Ch. 2, p. 82.

⁹⁹ *De somno* III.1.12, p. 195. Maimonides (1135–1204) also believed that the best indication of a true prophet was his distance from bodily pleasures: *Dux seu director dubitantium aut perplexorum* (Paris, 1520) II.41, fol. 66v.

¹⁰⁰ *De somno* III.1.12, p. 195. Albert's 'heavenly instinct' therefore refers to the physical heavens. On the struggles of thirteenth-century theologians with Aristotle's naturalized account of prophetic dreams, see S. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 87ff. John of Salisbury had been less precise in his distinctions, allowing that someone could be consulted about the future if he had either the spirit of prophecy or, as 'physicus', knew enough medicine to predict based on natural signs: *Policraticus I–IV* II.29, pp. 169–70.

¹⁰¹ *Postilla super Isaiam*, Geyer 19, prol., p. 2.

¹⁰² *Quaestio de prophetia*, ed. A. Rodolfi (Florence, 2009), a2.2, p. 54.

¹⁰³ *Super Isaiam*, prol., pp. 2–3. Augustine had granted astrologers (*mathematici*) a certain prophetic instinct (*instinctus*) in *De Gen. litt.* II.17.37, but he rejected their attempts

conjecture and skill (*ingenium*) with the authority of scriptural inspiration. Talent is one thing, but no conjecture (*coniectura*) about the future has the strength of firm truth unless it is vision (*visio*) that has been supernaturally inspired.¹⁰⁴ Despite his willingness to entertain the concept of natural, philosophical prophecy, Albert insists on careful boundaries for sacred authority.

What is striking here, however, is that, in the case of *theological* writings (as opposed to philosophical), he has trouble drawing a firm line, just as Hugh of St Victor did. In his two commentaries on Pseudo-Dionysius, Albert says that these texts are written in the manner 'common to all sacred Scripture' (*communis in tota sacra scriptura*), and that their efficient cause is the Holy Spirit—'as in all theological books'—the same cause by which all saints (*sancti*) speak.¹⁰⁵ Albert does not justify his claim by citing the traditional belief that Dionysius was a follower of St Paul; he says simply that a person with *scientia* such as Dionysius' has both 'clarity of understanding' (*limpiditas intellectus*) and 'right behaviour' (*rectitudo operis*).¹⁰⁶ As a wise and moral man, Dionysius could speak as the prophets spoke in Scripture.

IV. CONCLUSION

By the mid-thirteenth century, a polemical framework for assessing prophetic inspiration had developed, though inspiration's complexities still resisted firm definition. Early Dominican discussions of the issues seemed to open up as many avenues as they closed. As Humbert of Romans showed, preaching was one area where inspiration could both promote the order's efforts but at the same time challenge them. Not only preaching, however, but also contemplation, philosophy, astrology, and exegesis all laid claim to aspects of contemporary prophetic authority, and theorists

to determine peoples' lives. More harshly, he attacked *mathematici* as superstitious or demonic in *De catechizandis* VII.11.3, a position followed by John of Salisbury (*Policraticus* I–IV 1.9). John also calls interpreters of dreams 'coniectores' (I.12). Cf. Isidore's description of diviners as those who falsely conjecture about the future (*futura coniectant*): *Etymologiae* VIII.9.14.

¹⁰⁴ *De prophetia*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ *Super Mysticam theologiam Dionysii*, Geyer 37, ch. 1, p. 453; *Super Dionysium de Caelesti hierarchia*, Geyer 36, ch. 1, p. 3: 'sicut in omnibus libris theologicis'. Cf. Albert's claim that the Church Fathers 'received revelation (*revelatio*) from the Holy Spirit': *Super Sententiarum* IV d44.a38.resp., Borgnet 30, p. 594.

¹⁰⁶ *Super Mysticam*, p. 453; trans. S. Tugwell, in *Albert & Thomas: Selected Writings* (New York, 1988), p. 135.

such as Hugh of St Cher and Albert the Great drew different conclusions about how to speak about such prophecy, and how to draw lines around sacred authority. In the next chapter, we examine the ways in which these unresolved questions took on even greater significance during the remaining decades of the century, as disagreements over the legacy of Joachim of Fiore intensified.

4

The Mendicant Conflict over Prophecy: Thomas Aquinas and Peter John Olivi

The second half of the thirteenth century saw both Dominican and Franciscan theologians rise to ascendancy in university and ecclesiastical positions. This ascent was not without challenges: both mendicant orders faced opposition from the secular masters at the University of Paris, especially during the 1250s when the masters refused to allow Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure to take up their magisterial chairs. Papal and royal intervention was necessary, and this ensured that both orders would have a central role at the highest levels of education.¹ Nonetheless, the Franciscan Order soon found itself facing internal divisions that called into question its ability to help guide the Church intellectually and spiritually. Joachim of Fiore's prophecies of a new age brought on by new spiritual men had resonated strongly among Franciscans, infusing a sense of historical crisis into debates within the order over the place of poverty, while eventually rendering many Franciscans suspect in the eyes of other Church leaders.²

Especially in light of these fractures within the Franciscans, the Dominicans were called upon more and more to determine the boundaries of sacred authority, not merely as inquisitors but also as an order of teachers and preachers determined to fight heresy.³ Joachimism gave particular urgency to the task of harmonizing the conflicting strands of prophecy,

¹ Torrell summarizes the controversy: J.-P. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. R. Royal, i (Washington, DC, 1996), pp. 76–9.

² M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1969), ch. 4.

³ On Dominican prominence as inquisitors in this period, see C. C. Ames, *Righteous Persecution: Inquisition, Dominicans, and Christianity in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, PA, 2009), pp. 6–7. On Dominican theological influence at papal courts in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, see M. M. Mulchahey, 'The Dominican *Studium Romanae Curiae*: The Papacy, The *Magisterium* and the Friars', in K. Emery Jr et al. (eds), *Philosophy and Theology in the Studia of the Religious Orders and at Papal and Royal Courts* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 592–4.

and it brought to the fore precisely the question of what prophets of the current day 'should' look like. So too did the growing conspicuousness of visionaries, the first wave of what André Vauchez has called the 'mystical invasion'.⁴ Dominicans needed to determine the relationship between the special visionaries they saw in the scriptural past and the forms of inspiration they saw around them in the present Church. The order sought to present a unified intellectual front under the banner of Thomas Aquinas, and his considerations of prophecy became a standard part of Dominican theological training. One result of the Dominican efforts spearheaded by Aquinas was the promotion of a form of prophecy more detached from prediction, more suspicious of rapturous visions, and more in accord with the intellectual and homiletic activities of Dominican theologians.

This chapter examines Aquinas's synthesis of prophetic thought, and it then places this synthesis in contrast with the writings of the Franciscan theologian Peter John Olivi, whose theories were infused with Joachimist sympathies. Olivi's interests in contemporary visionaries and extraordinary forms of prophecy were precisely what the Dominican Order largely rejected. The whole process of clarification and debate in the thirteenth century crystallized different prophetic strands and led to a sharpening—but not a complete resolution—of what was considered legitimate prophecy, with profound consequences for the remainder of the Middle Ages.

I. THOMAS AQUINAS: PROPHECY AND SACRED HISTORY

When Thomas Aquinas turned to consider prophetic inspiration, he had to consider numerous underlying tensions present in his predecessors: the relationship of natural to supernatural knowledge and expression, of virtue to authority, of direct vision to secondary interpretation, of Old Testament prophecy to Pauline gifts in the contemporary Church. Aquinas's solution to these tensions was, in a certain sense, a resolution for the Dominican Order: his capacious treatment of the subject—including eight full questions in the *Summa theologiae*—was incorporated into the standardized Dominican curriculum as part of the promotion of his work from the end of the thirteenth century, which culminated in his canonization in

⁴ A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. J. Birrell (New York, 1997), p. 407.

1323.⁵ At the same time, his discussion reveals ongoing problems that were, in many respects, inherent to the subject and, as such, nearly impossible to resolve. Even as he responded to issues such as Joachimism by establishing firm boundaries, he attempted to balance the claims to authority of an inspired elite with the desire to leave open avenues for the work of the Spirit. There was much unsettled, but Aquinas did go further than anyone else in the century in clarifying prophetic phenomena.

Compared with other twelfth- and thirteenth-century treatises, Aquinas provides the fullest scholastic treatment of prophecy.⁶ His most mature discussion occurs in the *Summa theologiae* II-II 171–8 (a section written 1271–2).⁷ The location of this discussion within the *Summa* is also significant. The final nineteen questions of II-II (171–89) are reflections on the different states and ministries in the Church; within this setting, Aquinas puts prophecy in the category of special charisms (*gratiae gratis datae*), equivalent to Paul's gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12).⁸ (Aquinas was writing his commentary on 1 Corinthians simultaneously.) Prophecy is one of many gifts whose purpose is to communicate divine revelation and to guide the contemporary Church, but prophecy also has pride of place within these gifts. This tension persists throughout Aquinas's treatment—prophecy is both a special charism that singles someone out for particular responsibilities and, at the same time, it functions as part of a broader series of communal activities with varying degrees of supernatural intervention.

Aquinas's approach reveals two emphases: the non-predictive capacities of prophecy, and the ordered, regular nature of inspiration. Prophecy, he writes, first and chiefly (*principaliter*) consists in understanding or knowledge (*cognitio*).⁹ Secondarily, prophecy consists of speaking (*locutio*) what has been understood, and in this way it helps to build up the Church (*ad aedificationem Ecclesiae*). Finally, prophecy consists in confirmation by the working of miracles (*operatio miraculorum*).¹⁰

⁵ The 1279 Dominican general chapter in Paris declared that no open contradiction of Aquinas's teachings would be tolerated, and at the 1313 general chapter in Metz, his writings became the centrepiece of the curriculum for their houses of study: M.M. Mulchahey, 'First the Bow is Bent in Study—': *Dominican Education before 1350* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 141ff.

⁶ J.-P. Torrell, introduction in Thomas Aquinas, *Somme théologique: La Prophétie*, ed. P. Synave and P. Benoit, 2nd edn (Paris, 2005), p. 28.

⁷ Aquinas's initial attempt to describe prophecy appears in *De veritate* qq.12–14 (written 1256–9). Its scope and concerns are generally the same as the *Summa*, so I focus only on the latter, while noting any relevant differences.

⁸ *ST* II-II 171.prol.

⁹ *ST* II-II 171.prol., a1.co.: 'All the gifts relating to knowledge (*cognitio*) can be listed under the heading of prophecy'.

¹⁰ *ST* II-II 171.a1.co.

Aquinas opens his treatment with the first major theological discussion of the ambiguous term *vates* since Peter Lombard's.¹¹ Like Peter, he draws on Isidore's discussions of poets and prophets,¹² but the alterations he makes are revealing. He says that the person who was called seer (*videns*) in the Old Testament was known to the gentiles as 'vates', from *vis mentis*.¹³ Isidore had listed prediction first in his etymological discussion of *propheta*,¹⁴ but Aquinas, like Peter Lombard before him, downplays this aspect by omitting prediction from the initial definition, introducing it only after discussing the second element, prophetic speech: thus, prophets speak truths about remote things ('a remotis fantur'), which include the future (*futura*).¹⁵ Aquinas acknowledges the traditional view of Old Testament prophets by calling prediction the most proper form of prophecy (*propriissime*), but he then—and much more definitively than Hugh of St Cher and Albert the Great—shifts emphasis away from this notion. Prophetic inspiration, he says, has as its object *all* reality (*res*), divine or human, especially things far removed (*procul*) from ordinary knowledge.¹⁶ The 'far-sightedness' that Aquinas sees at the heart of prophecy, therefore, covers not only quantitative distances of time or space, but also the qualitative depth of understanding.

Aquinas's emphasis may have looked similar to Peter Lombard's, but the stakes were higher than they were for Peter a century earlier. Aquinas needed to contend, in particular, with the challenges raised by the prophetic claims of Joachim of Fiore which were increasingly popular, especially among Franciscans. Aquinas was thus not the first to promote the idea of prophecy without prediction, but he undertook that promotion with exceeding urgency and interest. His antipathy to Joachimite ideas has been well documented, but not in connection to developments within his own thinking about prophecy, inspiration, and authority. Before considering this antipathy, I will first briefly summarize Joachim's ideas as Aquinas encountered them.¹⁷

¹¹ Albert used *vates* briefly in a definition of *propheta*, deriving *vates* from *vis mentis* because of a prophet's insight into divine mysteries: *Postilla super Ieremiam*, Geyer 19, I.5, p. 635.

¹² For Peter's discussion, see Ch. 2, pp. 78ff.

¹³ ST II-II 171.a1.co.

¹⁴ Isidore used *vis mentis* for poets and *futura videbant* for prophets.

¹⁵ ST II-II 171.a1.co. Torrell overstates Aquinas's role as the first to turn away from predictive prophecy: *Recherches*, p. 208.

¹⁶ ST II-II 171.a3.resp.

¹⁷ Lubac is correct in maintaining that Aquinas was not explicitly creating a new theology in opposition to Joachim: H. de Lubac, *La postérité spirituelle de Joachim de Flore*, i, (Paris, 1979), p. 159. My point is that Aquinas reinforced certain emphases in light of Joachim. M.-M. Dufeil is one of the few scholars to link Aquinas's treatment of prophecy with his response to Joachim, though Dufeil is more concerned with Aquinas's philosophy of time than with his approach to inspiration and authority: see M.-M. Dufeil,

Joachim believed that he had found in Scripture the key to all history, past, present, and future. Just as the Old Testament had been the age of the Father, and the New Testament the age of the Son, so would there be (and soon) a third age, an age of the Spirit—a new state within history, characterized by greater spiritual understanding and the emergence of two groups of *virī spirituales*.¹⁸ In his *Psalterium decem cordarum*, Joachim described how his insights came not from study (*studium*) or willed effort but through the grace of the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ Inspired interpretation of Scripture revealed to Joachim truths about all of history. Unlike Peter Lombard and the exegetes discussed in Chapter Two, therefore, Joachim's exegetical prophecy remained rooted in historical narrative, along the lines established by Hugh of St Victor. Like Rupert of Deutz, Joachim did not claim the *spiritus prophetiae*, only the *spiritus intelligentiae*.²⁰ Joachim accepted, with Augustine, that the spirit of prophecy was indeed essentially over with Christ, but he believed that spiritual *intelligentia*, the understanding of prophetic texts, was growing in the current age and that he was one of its bearers.²¹ As with much of Joachim's more refined terminology, this distinction was lost with the spread of his reputation: Cistercian liturgy commemorated the abbot as endowed with the *spiritus propheticus*, while Roger Bacon (d. 1292) hoped to find a means of dealing with Tartar attacks by inspecting texts from a number of prophets such as the Sibyl, Merlin, and Joachim.²²

Indeed, precisely because Joachim had predicted the rise of new *virī spirituales*, the two mendicant orders which were founded soon after his death accepted him as their foreteller. Early Dominicans, for example, showed few qualms about relying on Joachim's statements to justify their existence: Gerard of Frachet's history of the order (the *Vitas fratrum [sic]* of 1256 is one example).²³ It was the Franciscans in particular, though, with their tendency to see in Francis a radical new exemplar of the Christian

'Autour du terme et du concept de prophétie chez Saint Thomas d'Aquin', in *Saint Thomas et l'histoire* (Aix-en-Provence, 1991), pp. 91–109. McGinn also surveys Aquinas's response to Joachim: B. McGinn, 'The Abbot and the Doctors: Scholastic Reactions to the Radical Eschatology of Joachim of Fiore', *Church History*, 40 (1971), pp. 30–47.

¹⁸ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 16ff. See Joachim's *Liber de concordia* (Venice, 1519; repr. Frankfurt, 1964) V.50, p. 84c.

¹⁹ *Psalterium decem cordarum*, ed. K.-V. Selge (Rome, 2009), praef., p. 6.

²⁰ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 4–6, 12, 16. On the two *spiritus*, see Ch. 1, p. 40.

²¹ *Prefatio super Apocalipsim*, ed. K.-V. Selge (Rome, 1995), p. 30.

²² Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 36, 41–2, 46–7. Cf. also Dante on Joachim, *Paradiso*, ed. R. Hollander (New York, 2007), 12.41: 'di spirito propheticò dotato'.

²³ *Vitas fratrum*, printed as *Vitae fratrum Ordinis Praedicatorum*, ed. B. M. Reichert, *MOPH* 1, pp. 12–14. This work was written at the urging of Humbert of Romans and spread among Dominican houses of study. It lists Joachim alongside other predictors of the Dominicans such as the Sibyl and Hildegard.

life, who gravitated not only towards the Joachimist prediction of their order but also towards Joachimist views of history.²⁴ Soon, however, some of the more unsettling implications of using Joachim to think about Christian history became starkly clear. In 1254, the Franciscan friar Gerard of Borgo San Donnino's *Liber introductorius* identified Joachim's writings as the basis for an 'Eternal Gospel'—or even as that Gospel itself—which abrogated both the scriptural gospels and ecclesiastical authority. This Gospel would usher in—imminently—an entirely new era (*status*) of contemplation and love (*caritas*).²⁵

Reaction was swift. A papal commission in Anagni (1255) and an episcopal synod at Arles (1263) condemned Gerard, and from that point, suspicion of Joachimism grew.²⁶ The Franciscans were hit especially hard by the wave of anti-Joachimism which followed: John of Parma, the Franciscan minister general, was forced to resign, and a cloud hung over the order.²⁷ Even among opponents of Joachimism, however, comparable apocalyptic claims could be found: the theologian William of Saint-Amour's anti-mendicant tract *De periculis novissimorum temporum* (1256) saw in Gerard's *Liber introductorius* not the promise of a peaceful age of history, but an indication of the imminent arrival of the Antichrist.²⁸ For William, who was engaged in arguments with mendicants over teaching authority at the University of Paris, Gerard's book was confirmation of the friars' pernicious influence. It was also a threat to the prophetic authority of secular masters, since William saw the task of university theologians as analogous to that of ancient prophets: 'Just as the prophets in holy Scripture are called "seers" (*videntes*) . . . , so those who devote themselves to Scripture and expound it can truly be called "seers"'.²⁹ These Joachimist developments meant, for William, that true

²⁴ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 175ff. John of La Rochelle (d.1245), for instance, one of the first Franciscan masters in Theology at Paris, spoke of Francis as a new Adam: N. Bériou, 'Saint François, premier prophète de son ordre, dans les sermons du xiii^e siècle', *MEFRMA*, 102 (1990), p. 538.

²⁵ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 3, 14, 59ff., 187ff.

²⁶ D. Burr, *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom* (Philadelphia, PA, 1993), pp. 14ff.; Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 60ff.

²⁷ D. Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans* (University Park, PA, 2001), pp. 30–1, 38.

²⁸ K. Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN, 2006), p. 57. William spoke of being in the seventh age (*aetas*) of the world: *De periculis novissimorum temporum*, ed. and trans. G. Geltner (Paris, 2008), 8, p. 76.

²⁹ *De periculis*, prol., pp. 38–9: 'Sicut prophete in sacris scripturis appellantur "videntes" . . . , sic vacantes scripturis et exponentes eas "videntes" merito dici possunt'. William cites the *Glossa* on the word 'prophetas' in Eph. 4:11: 'id est, scripturarum explanatores'.

‘seers’, that is, ‘we... professors of Christian faith’, had to proclaim the coming mendicant danger in apocalyptic fashion.³⁰

Aquinas was not deaf to the Joachimist expectations of his age, and he was the first Dominican to show clear hostility to them.³¹ He had been in Paris during the scandal of Gerard’s *Liber introductorius* and also during William of Saint-Amour’s attacks.³² Almost immediately, even before the quiet passing of 1260, the year many had assumed would initiate Joachim’s final *status*, Aquinas rejected Joachimism forcefully, and he continued to do so throughout his career, giving a theoretical grounding to episcopal suspicions. His apology for the mendicant orders, *Contra impugnantes dei cultum et religionem*, which was explicitly aimed at William, and the fourth book of his *Sentences* commentary, both written in 1256, set out the main thrust of what he would consistently argue till the end of his life: the Old Testament was definitively fulfilled with Christ, and there would be no further signs of sacred history given by the Spirit in prophecy, particularly not apocalyptic ones.³³ Aquinas’s Christocentric theology opposed a new pouring out of the Holy Spirit in a third age: Pentecost would only happen once.³⁴

Like Augustine—and unlike Hugh of St Victor or Joachim—Aquinas dismisses the notion that sacred history can be coherently discerned in the current, Sixth Age of the world. Scripture and the revelations made to its authors only make sense in light of Christ. Furthermore, any revelations of the future, even to the greatest prophets, occur only in general terms (*in quadam generalitate*).³⁵ Therefore,

³⁰ *De periculis*, prolog., pp. 38–9: ‘Nos... christiane fidei professores’. For *professor* as a term for teacher, see M. Teeuwen, *The Vocabulary of Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 116–17.

³¹ A. Vauchez, *Saints, prophètes et visionnaires* (Paris, 1999), p. 194. Aquinas’s critique did not put an immediate end to Dominican Joachimism: Reeves offers evidence of it till the mid-fourteenth century: *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 73, 161ff.

³² Torrell, *Saint Thomas*, i, pp. 36ff.

³³ *Super Sent. IV* d43.q1.a3.qc2.ad3. Aquinas’s *Contra impugnantes* declares that those who say they know the end time are *praesumptuosissimi*: in *Opusc. theo.*, ii, III.2.5.530, p. 104. Any signs of the Antichrist can be identified with what already happened in the time of the *ecclesia primitiva*: *Opusc. theo.*, ii, III.2.5.541, p. 106. Cf. *ST II-II* 95.a2.ad3: the New Testament has no prefiguration of future temporal things.

³⁴ *ST I-II* 106a4. Cf. the Arles synod’s rejection of any veneration of the Holy Spirit disconnected from Pentecost: *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. J. Mansi, xxiii (Venice, 1779), cols 1002–4. For a similarly strong Christocentric approach to prophecy, see the discussion of Robert Grosseteste’s *De cessatione legalium* in M. Schlosser, *Lucerna in caliginoso loco: Aspekte des Prophetie-Begriffes in der scholastischen Theologie* (Paderborn, 2000), pp. 29–32.

³⁵ *Lectura in Ephesios*, SEP, 3.1.139, 141, ii, pp. 36–7.

although the period of the New Testament is in general (*in generali*) prefigured by the period of the Old, it is nevertheless not necessary that individual things (*singula*) correspond to other individual things, especially since all the figures of the Old Testament were fulfilled in Christ.³⁶

A scriptural description, if it is not symbolic of Christ, has no other symbolism and is merely literal description.³⁷ These principles apply to the reading of all Scripture, and so they also apply to the reading of all history: individual events cannot be seen as symbols in a coherent systematic relationship encompassing the current age.³⁸ People might achieve insights into the future, but these insights would be either particular revelations (*revelationes particulares*) relevant only for individuals, or natural predictions like astrology, or human conjecture (*coniectura*), rather than prophecy.³⁹ Sacred history, therefore, cannot be read in a prophetic manner beyond Christ, who is its culmination.⁴⁰

Any prophets after Christ must therefore, by definition, have a task different from foretelling. The 'spirit of prophecy', he says, will not be 'for the declaration of any new doctrine of faith, but for the direction of human acts'.⁴¹ The early Church thus establishes a new model. The movement of history was important up to the Incarnation, but what

³⁶ *Super Sent. IV* d43.q1.a3.qc2.ad3: 'quamvis status novi testamenti in generali sit praefiguratus per statum veteris testamenti; non tamen oportet quod singula respondeant singulis, praecipue cum in Christo omnes figurae veteris testamenti fuerint completae'.

³⁷ *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, ed. R. Spiazzi, 8th edn (Turin, 1949) VII.q6.a2.ad1: 'non pertinet nisi ad historicum sensum'.

³⁸ Aquinas's thought is part of a general weakening of the symbolic vision of history among scholastic theologians: see J. Chydenius, *The Theory of Medieval Symbolism* (Helsinki, 1960), pp. 20ff. Cf. Hugh of St Victor's views: Ch. 1, p. 27.

³⁹ *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia*, ed. P. M. Pession, in R. Spiazzi (ed.), *Quaestiones disputatae*, 10th edn, ii (Turin, 1965), q5.a6.co., ad4; *Super Sent. IV* d43.q1.a3.qc2.ad3. Cf. Peter the Venerable on particular revelation, Ch. 3, pp. 93–4. In *Super Sent. IV*, Aquinas, like Albert, contrasts fallible *coniectura* with *spiritus prophetie* (cf. Ch. 3, pp. 106–7), while drawing on Augustine (*De civ. XVIII.52*): 'not with a prophetic spirit but with conjecture of the human mind ("non prophetico spiritu, sed coniectura mentis humanae"), which sometimes reaches the truth and sometimes is mistaken. And it seems the same regarding the sayings of the abbot Joachim, who through such conjectures about the future foretold some truths, and in other things he was deceived'. (McGinn suggests Aquinas allows Joachim some truths because of his prediction of *viri spirituales*, a prop for mendicants which Aquinas may have been loath to remove at a time when they were under attack: 'Abbot', p. 38.) Aquinas only uses *coniectura* in a dozen other places, including once as a description of pagan augury and twice in opposition to the truth of faith or revelation.

⁴⁰ Cf. McGinn, 'Abbot', p. 40 n. 60: 'Christ's position maintains a supremacy for Aquinas that it does not have with Joachim'.

⁴¹ *ST II-II* 174.a6.ad3: 'non defuerunt aliqui prophetiae spiritum habentes, non quidem ad novam doctrinam fidei depromendam, sed ad humanorum actuum directionem'. Aquinas uses the example of prophets in the Acts of the Apostles. Such prophecy for correcting behaviour will never cease: *Super Evangelium S. Matthaei lectura*, ed. R. Cai (Turin, 1951), 11.1.924.

remains from then till Judgement Day is moral growth in light of the new law: the old form of prophecy is gone, and the new, post-Incarnational form is concerned not with the individual events of history, especially not of those to come, but with the universal truths of the faith. Indeed, Aquinas explicitly rejects the notion that revelation about the future is better than revelation about the past. The most important revelation is of Christ's death and resurrection, which Aquinas considers not so much historical memory as perpetually living doctrine (and ever-present reality): 'although our faith is of past things, it is better to call it divine illumination than to call it remembrance of the past'.⁴²

With Aquinas's elimination of apocalyptic concerns, prophecy's concerns are then social and ecclesial utility. In this regard, Aquinas is faithful to the tradition of scholastic thinkers like Peter Lombard and Dominican preachers like Humbert of Romans who connected prophecy to the tasks of clerics, not as ministers of sacraments but as wise expositors of God's word.⁴³ Aquinas's anti-Joachimist conception of prophecy also dovetailed very well with larger developments in thirteenth-century theology. Many scholastic thinkers, including Aquinas, sought to make theology (and its basis, scriptural history) fit Aristotle's definition of *scientia* as a body of certain, proven knowledge, which would help establish theology as an independent discipline.⁴⁴ For Aristotle, *scientia* was not, among other things, a presentation of particulars, but rather a signification of universals: *de singulari non est scientia*.⁴⁵ An understanding of the particulars of temporal sequence or historical narrative (*series narrationis*) was thus not part of *scientia*.⁴⁶ Those engaged in the science of theology, like contemporary prophets, do not then deal primarily with the individual events (*singularia*) of scriptural history, only with their role as universal moral

⁴² *Super Sent.* III d25.a2.q2.ad3: 'Unde quamvis fides nostra sit praeteritorum, potius debet dici divina illuminatio, quam dicatur praeteritorum rememoratio'.

⁴³ See also Dufeil, 'Autour du terme', pp. 103, 105, who nonetheless overstates Aquinas's promotion of 'intellectuals' and university professors as the sole inheritors of this prophetic role.

⁴⁴ Aquinas addresses the issue in *ST* I 1.a2. Like most other theologians, Aquinas qualified his claims by noting that theology was a subaltern science, dependent on God's knowledge: U. G. Leinsle, *Introduction to Scholastic Theology*, trans. M. Miller (Washington, DC, 2010), pp. 131–3, 167–8.

⁴⁵ Aquinas, *Expositio libri posteriorum*, Leonine 1*2, I.44, p. 167.

⁴⁶ Vincent of Beauvais calls *historia* the 'series' of all times, which 'does not pertain directly to philosophy because it only narrates singular events (*singularia rerum gesta*), about which . . . art (*ars*) does not deal, according to Aristotle': *Speculum maius*, i, prol.16, col. 13. (For *ars* as a synonym of *scientia*, see Teeuwen, *Vocabulary*, pp. 358–60.) Tullio Gregory sees further evidence of this belief in the fact that exegesis no longer followed the *ordo narrationis*: 'Escatologia e aristotelismo nella scolastica medievale', *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, 40 (1961), p. 166.

exempla.⁴⁷ Aquinas thus had further justification for excluding Joachimist prophecies and historical concordances from theology—Joachimism was unscientific. In light of both his Christocentrism and his Aristotelianism, then, Aquinas reshapes prophecy to push aside eschatological speculations into history.⁴⁸

Another great spur to Aquinas's ideas was his belief that, once a Christocentric approach to prophetic authority was lost, very few limits could be placed on inspiration: the Holy Spirit's authority could be claimed by anyone. That Aquinas saw a link between a Joachimist historical perspective and the rise of ecstatic visionaries is clear from his discussion of the second-century heretics Montanus and Priscilla, who 'maintained that the Lord's promise to give the Holy Spirit was fulfilled in them, not in the Apostles'.⁴⁹ Not only did Montanus overstep the bounds of salvation history, but he promoted a flawed model of inspiration. Aquinas's belief (like Peter Lombard's) that prophecy entailed deep understanding meant that prophecy as divine frenzy or ecstasy had to be rejected. Unlike the gift of tongues, those with the gift of true prophecy always retain the choice to speak what they have seen, just as they retain the ability to understand it.⁵⁰ Aquinas acknowledges the possibility of a rapturous state—he tells us that Paul and Moses experienced it—but he notes that any loss of the senses is temporary, since the prophet will still need them to interpret the vision eventually, for 'interpretation is an act of prophecy'.⁵¹

Although Isidore and later etymologists had identified divine frenzy with the vatic composition of poets,⁵² thirteenth-century Dominicans were concerned much more with distancing prophecy from the frenzy of heretical preachers and visionaries, represented firmly in their minds by

⁴⁷ ST I 1.a2.ad2.

⁴⁸ Many non-Dominicans certainly shared Aquinas's anxiety regarding speculation about the end of days. The Cistercian bishop Odo of Châteauroux, for instance, in a 1273 sermon, invoked the scandal of Gerard's Eternal Gospel to attack clerics who were infatuated with prediction in their desire to seem prophets: 'Vos estis sal terre', ed. F. Gratien, *Études Franciscaines*, 29 (1913) pp. 649–55, esp. pp. 653–4.

⁴⁹ ST I-II 106.a4.ad2: 'Montanus et Priscilla posuerunt quod promissio Domini de Spiritu sancto dando non fuit completa in Apostolis, sed in eis'. Many patristic writers addressed the issue of Montanism, and Jerome was especially critical: see, e.g., *In Esaïam*, prol., p. 2. On Montanism's significance for patristic thought about prophecy, see Schlosser, *Lucerna*, pp. 130–6; and N. C. Hvidt, *Christian Prophecy* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 88ff.

⁵⁰ Aquinas, *Lectura in 1 Corinthios*, SEP, 14.6.876, i, p. 401.

⁵¹ *In 1 Cor.* 14.3.835, p. 394: 'interpretari est actus prophetiae'; ST II-II 175.a3.ad1, a4.ad3. For Aquinas's concepts of *raptus* and *excessus mentis*, see Torrell, introduction in *Somme théologique*, pp. 86ff.

⁵² See Ch. 2, pp. 79–80.

Montanus and his followers. Albert, for instance, asserted that Montanus lacked the knowledge (*scientia*) and order (*ordo*) necessary for prophecy.⁵³ The prophetic speaker shapes the speech and, as such, the human element of rhetorical cultivation must be present:

although the Holy Spirit is the first inspirer of the speech, nevertheless the reception of the inspiration and the order of utterance is in the power of the speaker. Thus the words of prophets are words of understanding and reason and highly ordered wisdom.⁵⁴

Aquinas follows Albert and rebuts ecstatic preaching: ‘the prophets in declaring what they have seen speak their own mind, and are not thrown off their mental balance, like persons who are possessed, as Priscilla and Montanus maintained’.⁵⁵ Mad prophets are false prophets.⁵⁶ Prophetic calm, rather than fury, is Aquinas’s model:

alienation [from the senses] ... does not take place in prophets with a distortion of nature, as with the possessed or the raving mad; but it is due to some well-ordered cause.⁵⁷

This is wholly consistent with Aquinas’s well-known formulation of the workings of grace—not destroying nature but completing it.⁵⁸ The supernatural element does not do violence to the natural structures of human epistemology.

While neither Albert nor Aquinas mention any specific contemporary challenges to prophetic authority associated with Montanism, there are several potential targets.⁵⁹ Anti-Islamic polemics used the same arguments (both in terms of sacred history and divine frenzy) to attack Muhammad.⁶⁰ Aquinas’s possible foray into the fray against Islam, the *Summa contra gentiles* (1259–65), also contains a passage rejecting the ‘error of

⁵³ *Super Isaiam*, prol., p. 2. Albert cites 1 Cor. 14:32 as justification, the same passage Jerome used in his attack on Montanus in *Commentarium in Abacuc prophetam*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 76A (Turnhout, 1958), prol., p. 580.

⁵⁴ Albert, *Super Isaiam*, prol., p. 2: ‘quamvis spiritus primus inspirator sit sermonis, tamen acceptio inspirationis et ordo prolotionis in potestate est proferentis. Et sic verba prophetarum intelligentiae et rationis et ordinatissimae sapientiae sunt verba’.

⁵⁵ *ST II-II* 173.a3.ad4: ‘ex proprio sensu loquuntur ea quae viderunt, non mente perturbata, sicut arreptiti, ut dixerunt Priscilla, et Montanus’.

⁵⁶ *ST II-II* 171.a1.ad3: ‘prophetae insani et stulti, non sunt veri prophetae, sed falsi’.

⁵⁷ *ST II-II* 173.a3.resp.: ‘alienatio ... non fit in prophetis cum aliqua inordinatione naturae, sicut in arreptitiis vel furiosis, sed per aliquam causam ordinatam’.

⁵⁸ *ST II-II* I 1.a8.ad2.

⁵⁹ It was ‘normal academic practice’ not to mention contemporary issues: A. J. Minnis, ‘*De impedimento sexus*: Women’s Bodies and Medieval Impediments to Female Ordination’, in P. Biller and A. J. Minnis (eds), *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body* (Rochester, NY, 1997), p. 134.

⁶⁰ See Ch. 3, pp. 90–1.

Priscilla and Montanus, who said that the Prophets, like possessed people (*arreptitii*), did not understand what they were saying'.⁶¹ Another development was the noticeable rise of ecstatic visionaries within Catholic Europe.⁶² Montanus' claims to authority based on grace rather than institutional office or learning were recurring in new form in lay visionaries such as Marie d'Oignes (d.1213), 'the archetype... of beguine spirituality', that is, of women outside the cloister dedicated to a form of the *vita apostolica*.⁶³ At the same time, the grace of visionary experience led to concerns that such gifts might be of evil origin, even when they appeared good.⁶⁴ We can be certain of at least one target for Montanist references: by the early fourteenth century, Montanus had become a shorthand allusion to Spiritual Franciscans and their Joachimist claims that the real age of the Spirit was only now coming into being.⁶⁵

Another major theme of religious experience in Aquinas's day was assertions of possession by the Holy Spirit. Indeed, even without the circulation of the Joachimist *Liber introductorius*, or Islam, or ecstatic visionaries, Aquinas would have been well aware of the dangers of prophetic movements with grand visions of historical progress. The Amalrician movement, centred in Paris at the beginning of the century, had a significant impact on ecclesiastical attitudes. Amalricians were burned in Paris in 1210 after apparently espousing inspired knowledge within a Joachimist framework, in which a new age of the Spirit rendered the current Church and its sacraments meaningless.⁶⁶ Their concept of inspiration extended far beyond the bounds of Scripture, with claims that 'God had spoken through Ovid just in the same way as through

⁶¹ SCG III.154.23: 'error Priscillae et Montani, qui dicebant prophetas, tanquam arreptitios, non intellexisse quae loquebantur'. On the book's audience, see Torrell, *Saint Thomas*, i, pp. 103–7. Ramon Martí, a student of Albert's, appears to have made use of SCG in his anti-Islamic *Pugio fidei* of 1278: J. V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York, 2002), p. 242.

⁶² B. McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200–1350)* (New York, 1998), p. 27: the predominant type of vision shifted c.1200 from tours of heaven and hell to 'ecstatic transport' accompanied by revelations in 'pictorial form'.

⁶³ McGinn, *Flowering*, pp. 33–4. Jacques de Vitry's *vita* of Marie (c.1214) popularized her as 'a new kind of mystic, who is as apostolic as she is ecstatic' (p. 36).

⁶⁴ Stephen of Bourbon tells the tale of a hermit alleged to have the *spiritus propheticus*, who was actually a demon: *De diversis materiis* II.6.134, p. 113. Caesarius of Heisterbach (d. c.1240) spoke of how demons could predict, give instruction (*instruere*), and speak of hidden things (*occulta*), all characteristics of a prophet: *Dialogus miraculorum*, ed. H. Schneider, iii (Turnhout, 2009) V.47, p. 1112.

⁶⁵ John XXII will use Montanus this way: see Ch. 5, p. 188.

⁶⁶ G. Dickson, 'The Burning of the Amalricians', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 40 (1989), pp. 347–8, 358–9. Their condemned doctrines are found in *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. H. Denifle, i (Paris, 1889), p. 72. Caesarius of Heisterbach documented their belief that the sacraments will cease: *Dialogus* V.22, iii, p. 1036.

Augustine'.⁶⁷ Amalricians also claimed the Holy Spirit was incarnated within them and caused their ecstatic states.⁶⁸ The Fourth Lateran Council condemned their doctrines as insane (*insana*) in the same decree in which it denounced some of Joachim's teachings on the Trinity.⁶⁹

Aquinas's emphasis on prophetic calm rather than rapture makes more sense in this context, but Aquinas also had to avoid subjecting prophecy too greatly to human will. Indeed, some of his contemporaries were, like Hugh of St Cher, worried about those claiming that the philosopher, simply by virtue of his intellectual ability, could be called a prophet.⁷⁰ In 1277, Bishop of Paris Stephen Tempier's condemnations would attack a certain radical intellectualism and promotion of nature at the expense of grace. Tempier rejected the possibility of ascent to God by the philosophical mind alone, as well as the promotion of natural prophecy and natural rapture (positions identified with the Arts Faculty at the University of Paris and with Siger of Brabant in particular).⁷¹ Aquinas, in this case, would have agreed with Tempier: despite his emphasis on the orderly and controlled nature of prophecy, he goes further than Albert the Great and resists prophecy as a natural phenomenon. 'Prophecy', he writes, 'is not something natural, but proceeds from a giving of the Holy Spirit'.⁷² Aquinas was therefore engaged in the precarious balancing act of situating prophecy between natural and supernatural activity.

Trying to establish this precise balance, Aquinas, like his predecessors, asks whether prophecy is a habitual state, something under a person's control, or something fleeting. He insists, though, unlike those predecessors (with the exception of Hugh of St Cher) that prophetic knowledge is

⁶⁷ Caesarius reports this: *Dialogus* V.22, iii, p. 1034; trans. H. von E. Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland, ii (New York, 1929), p. 348: 'Sicque Deum locutum fuisse in Ovidio, sicut in Augustino'.

⁶⁸ *Chartularium*, i, p. 71: 'Pater in Abraham incarnatus, Filius in Maria, Spiritus sanctus in nobis quotidie incarnatur'. An Amalrician named William the Goldsmith, 'their prophet' (*propheta eorum*) said that the Holy Spirit spoke through him and that within five years all men would become 'spiritalis': Caesarius, *Dialogus* V.22, iii, pp. 1032, 1036; *Chartularium* i, p. 72.

⁶⁹ *Sacrorum conciliorum*, constitution 2, pp. 207–9.

⁷⁰ For Hugh, see Ch. 3, p. 103.

⁷¹ A. Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1978), p. 261; Bériou, 'Saint François', pp. 544–5. Condemned articles include: no. 33, 'Quod raptus et visiones non fiunt, nisi per naturam', and no. 144, 'Quod omne bonum quod homini possibile est consistit in virtutibus intellectualibus': *La condamnation parisienne de 1277*, ed. D. Piché (Paris, 1999). For Siger, see, e.g., *De anima intellectiva*, ed. B. Bazan (Louvain, 1972) VI, p. 100: 'nihil prohibet naturaliter homines quosdam propheticos quorundam cognitionem habere'.

⁷² ST II-II 172.a1.co.: 'prophetia non est a natura, sed ex dono Spiritus Sancti'. In *De veritate* 12.a3.co. and ad7, Aquinas applied the term *naturalis prophetia* to astrological proclamations, though he noted that this was more art (*ars*) or skill than prophecy.

not a habit; if it were, it could be called up or cultivated whenever the prophet desired.⁷³ Prophecy more closely resembles *passio*, a transient, fleeting form of revelation beyond a person's control.⁷⁴ Not wanting, however, to promote a phenomenon radically disconnected from the life of its subject, Aquinas admits that prophecy is not mere *passio* either, since prophets seem to gain greater capacities for dealing with supernatural encounters, proving more inwardly receptive each time.⁷⁵ He develops a new, intermediate category for this progressive receptivity: *habilitas* ('propensity', or aptitude increased by repetition of the passion).⁷⁶ Prophecy is a gift, then, with an important but imprecise relation to a prophet's life.

Thus, prophecy should not be considered an automatic sign of holiness. Aquinas understood prophecy as a gift of the intellect (*intellectus*), not the affect (*affectus*), a gift of understanding rather than of the will.⁷⁷ Prophets received as part of their task a certain supernatural inspiration added to the workings of their natural intellect, but they were not made holier by that vision or by communicating it. Indeed, since prophecy 'requires no pre-existing disposition', then a prophet could be anyone, regardless of one's habits of prayer or quality of actions.⁷⁸ The contemporary prophetic gift was to be less a sign of wonder-working than an almost unnoticeable enhancement of natural cognitional activities.

For many medieval theologians, as we have seen, prophecy had a more certain relationship to sanctity than Aquinas was willing to grant it. The connection between vision and virtue, between inspired words and saintliness, had never been ironclad, as the uncertainty over *mali prophetae*—evident in Peter Lombard and Peter the Venerable—shows.⁷⁹ Nonetheless, though God might choose anyone to be a prophet, the most prevalent assumption was that this choice indicated sanctity, and over the course of the thirteenth century, visions (often equated with the prophetic gift) became an increasingly important proof of holiness. In the early fourteenth century, canonization processes began acknowledging this development, expanding beyond the more straightforward criteria of pious works to include visions, revelations, and prophecies.⁸⁰ Indeed, the rise of visions as part

⁷³ ST II-II 171.a2.co.: 'a steady disposition (*habitus*) is that by which a person acts when he wishes to'. Aquinas alters the answers he gave in *De veritate* 12.a1.co, where prophecy was a *habitus*. Albert called prophecy a *quasi habitus*, but one which could not be attained through inquiry (*inquisitio*): *De somno* III.1.3, p. 181.

⁷⁴ ST II-II 171.a2.co.

⁷⁵ ST II-II 172.a4.

⁷⁶ ST II-II 171.a2.ad2. See also Torrell, introduction in *Somme théologique*, pp. 40–1.

⁷⁷ ST II-II 172.a4.co. Cf. Albert, *De prophetia*, 3, p. 64.

⁷⁸ ST II-II 172.a3.co.: 'non praecedit aliquam dispositionem'.

⁷⁹ Aquinas names Balaam and the Sibyls as prophets used by God: ST II-II 172.a6.

⁸⁰ Vauchez, *Saints*, pp. 210–11. No category for visions and prophecies existed in canonization proceedings until 1318, with Clare of Montefalco: Vauchez, *Sainthood*,

of canonizations can be read as a reaction against the early thirteenth-century emphasis on virtuous acts (and sidelining of miracles).⁸¹ Vauchez argues that Aquinas's admittance of the slim possibility of rapture within his categories of prophecy helped promote prophetic visionary experiences as indicators of sanctity.⁸² Thus, supporters of rapturous visionaries generally insisted that these visions were *not* cultivated by habitual human effort (*habitus*), thereby proving their divine origin. The Swedish Dominican Peter of Dacia, for instance, wrote a poem (c. 1272) in praise of the visionary Christine of Stommeln, to which he added a commentary explaining her rapturous experiences in light of Aquinas's teaching on prophecy as *habilitas*.⁸³ The early fourteenth-century prologue to Gertrude of Helfta's (d. c. 1301) *Legatus divinae pietatis* went further, telling its readers that the text was *not* a literary creation, not made by talent ('ex ingenio'), by effort ('ex industria'), nor by *any* natural propensity for eloquence ('ex habilitate eloquentiae').⁸⁴ The gift by itself proved its sacred source.

The mystical and extraordinary was certainly one route for prophecy to take at the end of the thirteenth century, but the main thrust of Aquinas's arguments push away from spontaneous visions and toward the ordinary. To be sure, his rejection of *habitus* struck against attempts to attain prophecy through human effort, and this included a rejection not only of purely 'natural' prophecy, but also of the close connection between cultivated contemplation and prophetic insight forged by Hugh of St Victor among others. At the same time, this did not mean Aquinas automatically categorized prophecy as extraordinary.

Aquinas confirmed his emphasis on 'ordinary' prophecy through his ranking of the prophets. Moses and David's prophecies, he says, represent the noblest form—prophecy through 'intellectual vision' (*visio intellectualis*), the supernatural elevation of the understanding to comprehend divine mysteries.⁸⁵ Moses had the greatest intellectual vision of God's essence, while David's vision puts him a close second because he most perfectly and

pp. 507 n. 18, 523. Visionary phenomena occupy 31 of the 212 surviving interrogatory articles for Clare's proceedings, while miracles occupy 36: see *Il Processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, ed. E. Menestò (Perugia, 1984), pp. 3–33.

⁸¹ See Ch. 3, p. 92.

⁸² *Saints*, p. 122.

⁸³ Peter asserts Christine's sanctity while acknowledging prophecy can be given to the wicked (*mali*): *De gratia naturam ditante*, ed. M. Asztalos (Stockholm, 1982), 12.25–9, 42–51, pp. 159–60, 165–9.

⁸⁴ *Legatus divinae pietatis*, ed. P. Doyère, in *Oeuvres spirituelles*, ii (Paris, 1968) I.1.3, p. 124.

⁸⁵ ST II-II 174.a2.co.

clearly understood and expressed through the Psalms the spiritual mystery of the Incarnation.⁸⁶ Aquinas insisted that this intellectual vision happened in accord with one's natural way of knowing: no images were supernaturally added to the rational process, but rather the prophetic light elevated the understanding.⁸⁷ Aquinas's best prophet is not someone flooded with extraordinary pictures, but rather someone with expanded capacities of knowledge. Aquinas was aware that this was not the standard model of prophecy found in Scripture—that belonged to a prophet *ex officio* like Isaiah who was called by God, who had imaginary vision (*visio imaginaria*), and who produced miracles. Indeed, Hugh of St Cher's *quaestio* explicitly placed David's intellectual prophecy below Isaiah's visions because Isaiah received special images.⁸⁸ Despite lying beyond the usual scriptural experience, however, Aquinas makes 'intellectual prophecy' his standard.⁸⁹

To put this in a larger context, Aquinas significantly revised Augustine's tripartite classification of vision.⁹⁰ He accepted Augustine's top two tiers, intellectual and imaginary. But below these, Aquinas added his own categories, replacing corporeal vision with two other rungs which, despite his strictures regarding prophecy's supernatural nature, truly stretch the boundaries of prophetic interpretation. Ranked below intellectual and imaginary vision is a third level, which Aquinas describes as 'when an inward light heightens a man's knowledge to know truths which however do not exceed the capacities of natural knowledge'.⁹¹ Solomon's wisdom, he says, is an example of this, for his writings come not from image-filled visions but from enhanced reflection on the world. Aquinas calls this

⁸⁶ ST II-II 173.a2.co.; 174.a2.ad3, a3.co., a4. Moses was also the premier prophet for others, e.g. for Augustine, *De Gen. litt.* XII.27, pp. 420–2.

⁸⁷ For Aquinas, almost all knowledge in this life, even of the divine, comes through a natural type of image (*phantasmata*) derived from sense data: ST II-II 174.a2.co, ad4. Thus, when he describes David's vision as imageless, he means there were no images added *supernaturally*, unlike Augustine's *visio imaginaria*. Even if Moses and Paul, by a special grace, saw God without natural images, Aquinas's point is that prophecy does not *require* this miraculous intervention: see Torrell, introduction in *Somme théologique*, pp. 93–4, and *Théorie*, pp. 213–14.

⁸⁸ Since David's intellectual inspiration was without images (*sine ymagine*), Hugh considered Isaiah, Daniel, and Jeremiah more properly (*proprie*) prophets. In his Psalm *postilla*, however, Hugh proclaimed David the best prophet, again indicating tension within Hugh's circle.

⁸⁹ Michelle Karnes (relying only on *De veritate* and not *ST*) misses this point in her attempt to highlight the role of imagination, claiming that Aquinas sees 'disorientation' as a deliberate goal of prophecy: 'Marvels in the Medieval Imagination', *Speculum*, 90 (2015), p. 342. Aquinas says, rather, that manifestation of truth is the goal: ST 174.a2.co.

⁹⁰ For a comparison of Augustine's and Aquinas's categories, see the Appendix.

⁹¹ ST II-II 174.a3.resp.: 'cum aliquis ex interiori lumine illustratur ad cognoscendum aliqua quae tamen non excedunt limites naturalis cognitionis'.

mode of inspiration 'intellectual prophecy' (*prophetia intellectualis*).⁹² The terminology is confusing, because this is *different* from the highest ranking prophecy, that of intellectual (*intellectualis*) visions. This lower sort is also intellectual, yet it deals primarily with *human* truths and is thus lower than the image-based supernatural prophecy of Isaiah.⁹³ Thus, 'intellectual prophecy' describes both the rapture of Moses' insights into the divine and a more naturalized wisdom and understanding without rapture.

Aquinas's use of Solomon as an example makes it clear that the lower form of 'intellectual prophecy' is essentially the prophecy of those in the scriptural category of Hagiography such as Solomon. Aquinas describes a *hagiographus* as someone generally (*frequentius*) writing, not in God's name (*ex persona Dei*) but in one's own (*ex persona propria*) based on knowledge available to natural reason (*ratio humana*), with the aid of divine illumination (*divinum lumen*).⁹⁴ Two criteria stand out which separate hagiographers from prophets *ex officio*: the subject matter is natural, and it is spoken *ex persona propria*, in other words, not *ex persona Dei* as Moses spoke.⁹⁵ Hagiographers *generally* speak about human truths, but not always: there are times when they are granted insight into divine mysteries and then speak *ex persona Dei*. Aquinas clearly imagines David's Psalms to be one such exception. Because David's prophecy concerns divine things *and* it is intellectual, David the wise hagiographer thus moves ahead of Isaiah.⁹⁶ David was special not by office or mission, but by grace, in a way that elevated him above both other hagiographers and image-based prophets.⁹⁷

This uneasy placement of 'intellectual' prophecy as either the highest insight or a more ordinary understanding reveals the tensions between two

⁹² ST II-II 174.a2.ad3.

⁹³ ST II-II 174.a3.co. Cf. Smalley's argument that from the end of the twelfth century, theologians increasingly viewed Scripture's Wisdom Literature as philosophical in nature, along the lines of Aristotle's *libri naturales*, which were then entering the school curriculum: B. Smalley, *Medieval Exegesis of Wisdom Literature*, ed. R. Murphy (Atlanta, GA, 1986), p. 7.

⁹⁴ ST II-II 174.a2.ad3.

⁹⁵ Cf. ST II-II 174.a4.co., and Aquinas's 1256 lecture on the divisions of Scripture, in which he describes Hagiographic writers as speaking 'non tamen ex parte Domini, sed quasi ex se ipsis', in the same manner as apocryphal texts: *Principium* 'Hic est liber', in *Opusc. theo.*, i, pp. 436–7.

⁹⁶ Aquinas cites Ecclesiasticus as an epigram to his Psalms commentary, indicating his 'highly sapiential' approach to it; the most cited scriptural books in the commentary are, after Isaiah, from *hagiographa* and Wisdom literature—Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiasticus: T. Ryan, *Thomas Aquinas as Reader of the Psalms* (Notre Dame, IN, 2000), pp. 16–17, 48–9.

⁹⁷ Aquinas is elaborating on the traditional answer used to explain Jerome's placement of David among the hagiographers. Cf. Hugh of St Cher (*Postilla*, i, p. 14v) and Hugh of St Victor, Ch. 1, p. 22.

major forms of prophecy: the extraordinary Old Testament vision and the broader Pauline contemporary one.⁹⁸ In the *Summa*, taking his cue from the Old Testament model, Aquinas makes prophecy into the premier charism, yet modest hagiographic prophecy allows that charism to be distributed widely.⁹⁹ An even wider distribution occurs with the lowest of Aquinas's rungs of prophecy: inner prophetic 'instinct' (*interioris instinctus*) which inspires someone to perform actions that will guide people, as in Samson's breaking of bonds.¹⁰⁰ There is little knowledge involved here, and so Aquinas says it is below prophecy proper, but he still grants it the name.¹⁰¹ Yet in granting unknowing instinct the name of prophecy, Paul Synave and Pierre Benoit note, Aquinas 'reduce[s] every supernatural influence to prophecy', leaving a vast notion of the phenomenon.¹⁰²

There is more to this broadening tendency in Aquinas than has generally been acknowledged. Vauchez has recognized this tendency, but he focuses largely on the rejection of it by visionaries.¹⁰³ The significance, however, of this broadening becomes much clearer when within the context of Aquinas's understanding of prophecy's purpose, of its role in the contemporary Christian community. Indeed, this role functions for Aquinas as a way to draw necessary boundaries. It allows him to dismiss both philosophers and extraordinary mystics as prophets: after listing types of contemplation (*contemplatio*)—that of philosophy, of faith, and of rapture—Aquinas says, 'None of these is prophetic vision', because prophecy is a charism (*gratia gratis data*) given for a specific purpose, the governance or guidance of people in the world (*dispositio hominum in mundo*).¹⁰⁴ By examining more fully this purpose, we can see how theories of prophetic content and prophetic function interacted, enhancing each other but also creating tensions and difficulties in the delineation of prophetic phenomena.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ The major exception to this categorization is the New Testament Revelation of John, whom some thirteenth-century commentators began identifying as the greatest of the prophets in the context of apocalyptic prophecy. See D. Burr, 'Olivi on Prophecy', *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 17 (1996), pp. 370–8.

⁹⁹ *ST* II-II 171.prol.

¹⁰⁰ *ST* II-II 174.a3.co.

¹⁰¹ Aquinas also uses the term *instinctus propheticus* to refer to those who are inspired without awareness of the divine source, such as Caiaphas: *ST* II-II 173.a4.resp.

¹⁰² P. Synave and P. Benoit, *Prophecy and Inspiration: A Commentary on the Summa Theologica II-II, Questions 171–178*, trans. T. L. Sheridan and A. R. Dulles (New York, 1961), p. 43.

¹⁰³ *Saints*, p. 121.

¹⁰⁴ *Expositio super Isaiam ad litteram*, Leonine 28, 1.1, p. 9: 'Nulla autem istarum est visio prophetalis'.

¹⁰⁵ Hvidt notes how this issue has generally split modern commentators on Aquinas, who focus on either content (elite and individual) or function (broad and communitarian):

II. THOMAS AQUINAS: PROPHECY'S CURRENT ROLE

In his commentary on 1 Corinthians (1260s/1270s), Aquinas, like his predecessors, describes Pauline prophecy as interpretation. Someone prophesies by announcing to others either what he himself has seen or what has been revealed by the one who saw, and in this latter, secondary manner, Aquinas accepts that 'he who preaches prophesies'.¹⁰⁶ He explicitly connects such secondary prophecy to the writings of hagiographers later in the commentary:

a prophet is anyone who discerns the writings of the doctors, because they have been interpreted in the same spirit as they were brought forth; and so Solomon and David can be called prophets, inasmuch as they had the intellectual light to understand clearly and subtly.¹⁰⁷

This is Aquinas's version of the traditional *spiritus intelligentiae*, the spirit of interpretation. It is the basis both for lower-grade intellectual prophecy and for the tasks of teaching and preaching to which clerics applied their knowledge. Thus elsewhere Aquinas can call both *doctores* and *praedicatores* prophets, because they teach *doctrina*.¹⁰⁸ God's inspiration and intellectual illumination potentially extend to anyone engaged in the task of informing and building up the faith of the Church.

Crucially, however, Aquinas emphasizes that concrete ecclesiastical contexts are what raise teaching and preaching activity to a prophetic level. During the liturgy, those in a church who explicate or even simply read Scripture 'are said to be prophesying'.¹⁰⁹ Their authority becomes bound up in the Church's and they speak in the person of the Church (*ex persona totius Ecclesiae*). The Spirit is at work where Scripture is being expounded, even—remarkably—by those who sing psalms in choir; they, too, can be called prophets: a prophet 'proclaims the sayings of the

Christian Prophecy, pp. 139–40. My point is that much content in Aquinas also shows broadening tendencies.

¹⁰⁶ *In 1 Cor.*, 11.2.594, p. 346: 'ille qui praedicat prophetat'.

¹⁰⁷ *In 1 Cor.*, 14.1.813, p. 390: 'sic dicitur propheta omnis qui discernit doctorum scripturas, quia eodem spiritu interpretatae sunt quo editae sunt. Et sic Salomon et David possunt dici prophetae, inquantum habuerunt lumen intellectuale, ad clare et subtiliter intendum'.

¹⁰⁸ *Principium* 'Attendite a falsis prophetis', Parma 24, p. 227. Aquinas defines *doctores* as those who instruct the people about things which were revealed to others: *In 1 Cor.*, 12.3.755, p. 377.

¹⁰⁹ *In 1 Cor.*, 11.2.592, p. 346: 'qui in ecclesia... sacras scripturas legunt, dicuntur prophetantes'.

prophets, or explains them, or sings them in Church'.¹¹⁰ If such people understand what they are singing, according to Aquinas, they are interpreting Scripture in the same way that Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, with prophecy of their own. Understanding is crucial: if someone prays a Psalm aloud without understanding it, that person is merely using the gift of tongues, but if he prays with understanding, he 'prays and prophesies' (*orat et prophetat*).¹¹¹ This prayer or song is a public prayer, one for the good of the Church.

Aquinas's concept of the prophet as moral guide, rather than as visionary foreteller, therefore, gave strong impetus to prophets as part of the ordinary structures of the Church. But his redescription of liturgical and homiletic practices in terms of prophecy was also a way to resist the appropriation of the prophetic mantle by mystics. Visionaries were not usually part of institutional structures. This was particularly true of female visionaries: like Hugh of St Cher, Aquinas did not exclude women from receiving the revelation (*revelatio*) of prophecy, nor from the *private* announcement (*annunciatio privata*) of it, but he did not think prophetically inspired women should publicly preach.¹¹² His focus was not on extraordinary direct revelations, but on modest, enhanced understanding as part of public teaching and preaching on behalf of the Church, a task he reserved for certain men.

With this formulation of broad prophecy, miraculous confirmation also has little role to play. Aquinas does indeed state that miracles are a component of prophecy, a confirmation of its truths,¹¹³ yet his real interests are not on the outwardly marvellous. Miracles, in his thought, actually carried much the same ambiguity as prophecy itself: both were temporary gifts of grace (*gratiae gratis datae*) given for the purpose of building up the Church, and both were ultimately no proof of sanctity because they could be performed without love.¹¹⁴ At the same time, as

¹¹⁰ *In I Cor.*, 14.1.813, p. 390: 'Dicitur etiam propheta aliquis solum ex hoc quod prophetarum dicta denuntiat, seu exponit, seu cantat in Ecclesia'. Albert, too, seems to have believed this: 'he who sings psalms devoutly receives from God either the spirit of prophecy (*spiritus prophetiae*) or the spirit of compunction (*spiritus compunctionis*)', *Super Isaiam* 1.1, p. 11. Albert refers to Gregory the Great, who supported the idea of prophetic singing in *In Hiez.* (1.1.15, p. 12): 'For the voice of psalmody, when it is moved by the heart's intention, prepares a path back to the heart through the work of almighty God, so that it pours the mysteries of prophecy (*prophetiae mysteria*) or the grace (*gratia*) of compunction into the intent mind'. Gregory cites the example of Elisha using music to induce the *spiritus prophetiae*: cf. Ch. 2, p. 82, for Peter the Chanter's use of Elisha.

¹¹¹ *In I Cor.*, 14.3.837, p. 395.

¹¹² *In I Cor.*, 14.7, pp. 402–3.

¹¹³ *In I Cor.* 14.1.812, p. 390.

¹¹⁴ ST II-II 178 (miracles are placed right after prophecy in ST). Cf. *De veritate* 12.a5. co., pp. 383–4; trans., J. V. McGlynn, *Truth* (Chicago, 1953), p. 130: 'prophecy, the working of miracles (*operatio miraculorum*), ecclesiastical ministries (*ecclesiastica*

with Peter the Venerable, Aquinas was also capable of drawing on such proofs for polemical purposes. Thus, in his *Summa contra gentiles*, in line with traditional arguments, he attacks Muhammad for having produced no miracles, for having told fables (*fabulosa narratio*), and for not having been predicted by prophets.¹¹⁵ Aquinas's treatment of prophecy later in that same work emphasizes the elite prophetic experience of Old Testament prophets rather than the broad Pauline functions of 1 Corinthians, thus reinforcing Muhammad's exclusion from the ranks of prophets.¹¹⁶ Aquinas keeps elite prophetic experience firmly in the past: no claims of new doctrine should qualify as prophecy. Once this polemical boundary has been drawn, however, Aquinas easily accepts a broad understanding of Pauline prophecy within that boundary.

Yet Aquinas's wide application of the *spiritus intelligentiae* raised a host of problems. The roles of preacher and teacher (and even singer) of Scripture offer no visible distinctions between their inspired and non-inspired manifestations. While Aquinas emphasized the ecclesiastical or liturgical context in which prophetic inspiration would occur, there were numerous ways in which this distinction could be blurred. For one thing, the intellectual authority of teachers and professional theologians in *general* was taking on a special status. Aquinas acknowledged the special teaching authority of bishops (*magisterium cathedrae pastoralis*), which required both knowledge and love, but he, like many other theologians, recognized a second authority, that of theologians themselves (*magisterium cathedrae magistralis*), an authority based on their knowledge (*scientia*).¹¹⁷ Indeed, those whose knowledge has made them wise have the duty (*officium sapientis*) to order and govern others.¹¹⁸ Aquinas accepted, furthermore, that teaching and preaching the faith effectively in *universities* (so as to lead others to salvation) could ultimately be a sacred activity worthy of a special heavenly reward equivalent to that bestowed on martyrs and virgins. This 'privileged reward' (*privilegium*

ministeria), ... which contribute to the benefit of the Church (*ad utilitatem Ecclesiae*), are sometimes found apart from charity (*sine caritate*), which alone makes men good'.

¹¹⁵ I.6, p. 17. On the sources for Aquinas's knowledge of Islam, including Peter the Venerable, see J. Waltz, 'Muhammad and the Muslims in St Thomas Aquinas', *Muslim World*, 66 (1976), pp. 85–8. Humbert of Romans also criticized Muhammad's lack of miracles in his c.1266 *De predicatione sancte crucis contra Saracenos* (Nuremberg, 1495), 12, pp. 24–7.

¹¹⁶ SCG III.154.

¹¹⁷ *Quodlibetales* III.q4.a1.ad3. See also Y. Congar, 'Theologians and the Magisterium in the West: From the Gregorian Reform to the Council of Trent', *Chicago Studies*, 17 (1978), pp. 218–19.

¹¹⁸ SCG I.1.

praemium')—an *aureola* or halo—was due not merely to a *habitus* of understanding, not merely to intellectual competence, but to the use of it, to acts (*actus*) of teaching engaged in by *praedicatores* and *doctores* (even through their writings).¹¹⁹ Much like the gift of prophecy, 'the *aureola* of teaching is owed to the act of the *doctor*, which passes'.¹²⁰ This belief in the future reward of *doctores* became widely accepted among theologians by the end of the thirteenth century, as numerous quodlibetal opinions grounded the sacred activity of theologians on their unique social function of teaching and interpreting salvific revelation.¹²¹ Only learned theologians could articulate to the rest of the Church the principles for understanding that revelation. Unlike the sacramental mediation of the priestly institution, the special role of the learned was an act dependent on their *studium*. Prophecy thus drew close to academic theology.

Another area in which broad prophetic labels raised questions was in the relationship of clergy to laity. Katherine Zieman's study of liturgy in England highlights how concerns about the clerical performance of liturgical song *without* understanding arose at the same time (the late thirteenth century) as efforts to give the laity a greater understanding of the Mass. Underlying these concerns was the tension produced by using education as a basis for clerical authority.¹²² Mere repetition of words did not guarantee an inner comprehension. But basing clerical authority on the acquisition of understanding also meant that when the laity acquired that understanding, there was no discernible difference during the liturgy between lay people singing with understanding and the prophetic singing of clerics. Aquinas's conclusions point in that direction, even if he does not go there himself.

Yet another area of potential confusion was the overlapping of prophecy with the secular arts, with other forms of speaking and writing. Prophecy was, for Aquinas, a social vocation: to interpret revelation, explain it to the community, and offer guidance and motivation. His sermon, 'Attendite a falsis prophetis', for instance, enumerates the harm brought to the community of believers by prophets false in teaching, inspiration, intention, or

¹¹⁹ *Super Sent.* IV d49.q5.a5.qc1.co.; and ad5: 'scripta componere quidam modus docendi est'.

¹²⁰ *Quodlibetales* V.q12.a1.ad2: 'aureola doctrinae debetur actui doctoris, qui transit'.

¹²¹ See, e.g., the 1277 quodlibet of Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibeta*, i (Paris, 1518; repr. Louvain, 1961) II.12, fol. 38r; and the discussions in E. Marmursztejn, *L'Autorité des maîtres* (Paris, 2007), pp. 30–4, and J. Leclercq 'L'idéal du théologien au moyen âge: Textes inédits', *Revue des sciences religieuses*, 21 (1947), pp. 142ff.

¹²² K. Zieman, *Singing the New Song: Literacy and Liturgy in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia, PA, 2008), ch. 3. Cf. Thomas of Chobham's critique of priests reading without understanding, Ch. 3, p. 95.

appearance.¹²³ With this in mind, Aquinas, like twelfth-century exegetes before him (and in line with Humbert of Romans), accepts the close relationship between prophecy, preaching, and the art of rhetoric, especially in prophecy's broader forms. Aquinas recognized that rhetoric's sphere of operation was also properly communal: both rhetoric and prophecy establish credibility (*fides*) and then promote piety and virtue in society through the direction of human actions.¹²⁴

Linking prophecy with rhetoric, however, meant that Aquinas needed to consider other areas where rhetoric had influence. From his reading of Aristotle, for instance, Aquinas acknowledged that poetry had a purpose similar to rhetoric's: to help bring people to virtue when a firm belief (*fides*) had not yet been established.¹²⁵ Poetry did this by creating *admiratio*, which causes delight and the desire for knowledge. Delight could lead men to devotion as it did with song.¹²⁶ Aquinas acknowledged the importance of the delight which poetic representations brought.¹²⁷

Yet despite his assimilation of prophecy to preaching, or even to singing in church, Aquinas, like his scholastic predecessors, was not willing to draw a straight line from prophecy through rhetoric to poetry. His resistance depended first of all on his understanding of rhetoric, which he did not associate with obscurity.¹²⁸ He inherited a scholastic tradition which promoted simplicity and clarity of expression as necessary for the scientific language of theology.¹²⁹ He emphasizes, even more than most of his contemporaries, that arguments used by theological *doctores* had to rely on the literal sense of Scripture, which was clear (*plane*) and open (*aperte*), unlike the spiritual senses.¹³⁰ The scholastic resistance to ambiguity led

¹²³ 'Attendite', pp. 226–30.

¹²⁴ For the classical sources on *fides* in rhetoric, see M. S. Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400–1500* (Manchester, 2011), pp. 203, 267, 285–91.

¹²⁵ *Posteriorum* I.1, pp. 6–7; *ST* I-II 32.a8.

¹²⁶ *ST* II-II 91.a2, a2.ad3. As Minnis notes, Hermannus Alemannus' 1256 translation of Averroes' commentary on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* showed that poetry required not intellectual but psychological assent, seeking 'to move rather than prove': A. J. Minnis, 'Medieval Imagination and Memory', in *CHLC*, p. 255. For Aquinas's encounter with Aristotelian ideas about poetry, see C. C. Greenfield, *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics, 1250–1500* (Lewisburg, PA, 1981), pp. 48–53.

¹²⁷ *ST* I 91.a3. Aquinas's labelling of poetry as the 'lowest science' ('infima scientia') is a judgement made in comparison with sacred knowledge: *ST* I 1.a9.

¹²⁸ For concerns about rhetorical ornament's relationship to truth throughout the medieval period, see Kempshall, *Rhetoric*, pp. 447ff.; and R. Copeland, 'Rhetoric and the Politics of the Literal Sense in Medieval Literary Theory', in P. Boitani and A. Torti (eds), *Interpretation: Medieval and Modern* (Woodbridge, 1993), p. 10.

¹²⁹ G. Dahan, *L'exégèse chrétienne de la Bible en occident médiéval, XIIe–XIVe siècle* (Paris, 1999), pp. 421–2.

¹³⁰ *ST* I 1.a10; *Super Isaiam*, prol., pp. 3–4. As a *scientia*, the arguments of theology had to avoid the imprecisions of symbolism: *Super Sent. I*, prol.a5.

Aquinas to consider rhetoric a form of rational persuasion, useful for teaching.¹³¹ Poetic language, on the other hand, did not have this quality; it obscured the truth as part of its method.

Poetic obscurity also differed from prophetic language, even when, as in Scripture, that language used apparent obscurity. Poets signify things (*res*) with words, but they do not have special access to hidden meanings, that is, to theological mysteries or the events of sacred history.¹³² Poetry does not indicate any special vision because it stays on a literal level, even when using metaphors.¹³³ Scriptural language, on the other hand, suggests a reality beyond human comprehension. Prophets saw beyond the veils of similitudes (*similitudines*), so that they could properly teach (*instruere*) about that reality.¹³⁴ Furthermore, as Aquinas's discussion of the Psalms showed, prophetic discourse reveals its inspired qualities more in its clear expression of truth than in its evocation of delightful representation.¹³⁵ When the prophet teaches revealed truths, it is therefore as rhetorician and preacher rather than poet.

Aquinas separated prophecy from poetry, but the connection to rhetoric remained, and in crucial ways it supported his emphasis—within the proper ecclesiastical context—on broad and ordinary inspiration, especially in the form of prudence, the virtue which governed rhetoric's communal role. While Hugh of St Victor had used prudence to incorporate prophecy into contemplation, Dominicans such as Humbert of Romans used it to cement prophecy's link with preaching. As theological assessment of prudence itself grew in the thirteenth century, Dominicans such as Albert and Aquinas helped to confirm prudence as the *central* Christian virtue, while Dominican moral-penitential manuals disseminated this idea to preachers and others.¹³⁶ Prudence helped create a strong connection between prophetic inspiration and the wisdom of ethical guidance communicated through rhetoric.

¹³¹ *Quodlibetales* IV.q9.a3. Underlying Aquinas's assumptions were contemporary classifications of rhetoric as part of both logic and political reasoning: see R. Copeland and I. Sluiter (eds), introduction in *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300–1475* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 56–60. For more on scholastic attitudes, see M. Bose, 'Two Phases of Scholastic Self-Consciousness: Reflections on Method in Aquinas and Pecock', in P. van Geest et al. (eds), *Aquinas as Authority*, (Leuven, 2002), pp. 105–6.

¹³² *Quodlibetales* VII.6.a2.ad1, a3.resp.

¹³³ *ST I* 1.10.ad3.

¹³⁴ *ST I* 1.a9.ad2.

¹³⁵ Contrast Gebeno of Eberbach, the prior of Cîteaux, who in 1220 stated that the obscurity of Hildegard's style was the very proof of her prophetic authenticity: *Speculum futurorum temporum*, ed. J. B. Pitra, in *Analecta sacra spicilegio Solesmensi parata*, viii: *Analecta sanctae Hildegardis opera spicilegio Solesmensi parata* (Monte Cassino, 1882), prol.3, pp. 483–4.

¹³⁶ Murray, *Reason*, pp. 133–4.

Thus the Dominicans brought prophetic vision more firmly down to earth—and more firmly away from sacred history—than the Victorine emphasis on contemplation had. Seeking an analogy to describe God's providence (*providentia*) in human terms, Aquinas draws, as Hugh did, upon the traditional formulation of the virtue of *prudentia*: prudence consists of insight into the past (*memoria*), the present (*intelligentia*), and the future (through foresight, that is, *providentia*).¹³⁷ Just as providence orders all things to an end based on its overarching vision, so prudence, as the link between understanding and morals, guides human acts towards their proper end.¹³⁸ Prudence—a form of wisdom about contingent things—determines how to put the knowledge of ethical doctrine into practice, because prudence comprehends both universals (*universalia*) and particulars (*singularia*).¹³⁹ The prudential person must use *providentia*, foresight, to guide his acts and those of others to their proper goal.¹⁴⁰ The figure, therefore, most resembling the prudent orator is the prophet, who, with insight into past, present, and future, discerns the order of God's providential plan and uses his illuminated reason to offer guidance. Humbert of Romans came to the same conclusions: the wise preacher who interprets and explains God's word to the community is engaged both in an act of prudential rhetoric and in an act of prophecy.¹⁴¹

Aquinas's connection of prophecy to prudence therefore established certain boundaries while at the same time opening others. The promotion of prudent preaching and teaching, in combination with the placement of prophecy within the ordinary structures of the Church, helped to emphasize prophecy's distance from Joachimist tendencies. Yet prudence was also the fundamental basis for discernment that could be more widely developed and acquired. Aquinas certainly distinguished conceptually between a gift (such as prophecy) and a virtue (such as prudence); indeed, he was one of the first theologians to articulate these distinctions clearly.¹⁴² But he also acknowledged that virtues could be commonly described as gifts, especially since certain virtues might be infused by God.¹⁴³ In function, therefore, the prophet's role remained closest to that of a wise, virtuous guide.

¹³⁷ *ST* I 22.a1. Aquinas uses Hugh's sources—Cicero and Macrobius—for his discussion of prudence in *ST* II-II 48.a1. Cf. Ch. 1, pp. 30, 42–3.

¹³⁸ *ST* I-II 58.a5; II-II 47.a6.

¹³⁹ *ST* I-II 61.3–4; II-II 47.a3, 55.4, and 47.2.ad1: 'prudentia est sapientia in rebus humanis'. Cf. Albert, *Ethica*, Borgnet 7, VI.2.23.

¹⁴⁰ *ST* II-II 171.prol.; 47.a4.

¹⁴¹ See Ch. 3, pp. 99–100.

¹⁴² O. Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, iii (Gembloux, 1949), p. 427.

¹⁴³ *ST* I-II 68.a1.co. For Aquinas, gifts dispose people to receive God's directives, while virtues follow reason's directives. Aquinas actually described three types of prudence: first, infused knowledge of good and evil given to everyone at baptism (*ST* I-II 65.a2); second,

Similar links between prudence, prophecy, and wisdom appear in other thirteenth-century contexts, in which the virtue of *prudentia* was generally equated with *sapientia*, a gift of the Spirit.¹⁴⁴ The most widely-read treatise on the virtues in the late Middle Ages, the Dominican William Peraldus' (pre-1248) *Summa de virtutibus et vitiis*, equated prudence and wisdom, as did the jurist Albertano of Brescia's (d. c.1251) popular treatise *De amore et dilectione dei*, which explicitly linked *prudentia* to Scripture's Wisdom Literature, to the philosopher Seneca, and to Macrobius.¹⁴⁵ This equation was repeated in sermons as well, for instance in those of the Dominican Nicholas Gorran: 'in the heart of the prudent man rests wisdom'.¹⁴⁶ For the Dominican Stephen of Bourbon (d. c.1262), *prudentia spiritualis* was a freely given supernatural virtue (*virtus gratuita*).¹⁴⁷ Expansively-defined prudence could also evoke quite attenuated forms of prophecy. The *Fasciculus morum*, for instance, (a preacher's handbook composed c.1300 for Franciscans) followed the tripartite definition of prudence, giving each part a religious function: *memoria* was thus an examination of conscience, *intelligentia* the understanding and correction of past sins, and *providentia* the foresight of death and judgement.¹⁴⁸ This conception explains a late thirteenth-century sermon of James of Lausanne, OFM, which declared that all faithful members of the Church are prophets since they are responsible for looking ahead to their death and judgement.¹⁴⁹ With all these overlapping categories, conceptions of prophecy and prudence could approach each other, binding prophecy more closely to wisdom and confirming for prudential insight an elevated, inspired status.

Bound up with prophecy, the acquired prudence of the wise could push prophetic inspiration into the special activities of the learned, including writing. Prudence was the virtue, as we have seen, which good historians relied on as they used their *memoria* of the past to offer guidance to the

the acquired development of an intellectual *habitus* using reason (II-II 47.a2.co.); and third, the prudence of Macrobius, a *contemptus mundi* which saints display (I-II 61.a5).

¹⁴⁴ The precise balance in virtue between nature and grace was debated throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: I. P. Bejczy, *The Cardinal Virtues in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 123–33, 184ff.

¹⁴⁵ William Peraldus, *Summa virtutum ac vitiorum*, 1 (Antwerp, 1588) III.2.1, fol. 100v; Albertano of Brescia, *De amore et dilectione dei*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Add. C.12, IV.6, fols 37r–v, 40r. Humbert of Romans suggested Peraldus' *Summa* as reading for novices: Mulchahey, 'First the bow', pp. 109ff. On Albertano's influence, see J. M. Powell, *Albertanus of Brescia* (Philadelphia, PA, 1992), p. 4.

¹⁴⁶ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 799, fol. 71v: 'in corde prudentis requiescit sapientia'.

¹⁴⁷ *De diversis materiis* V.1.484, p. 417.

¹⁴⁸ *Fasciculus morum*, ed. S. Wenzel (University Park, PA, 1989), 5.31, pp. 588–92.

¹⁴⁹ Cited in Bériou, 'Saint François', p. 548 n. 48.

present for future action.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, Mary Carruthers has argued that prudence as *sapientia* comprised 'the suitable use of all knowledge, practical and speculative—including... the making of poems'.¹⁵¹ Aquinas does not acknowledge this poetic element explicitly, but in accepting broad prophecy's rhetorical and prudential component, the specifically ecclesiastical context he established for prophecy stands on tenuous ground, as do the distinctions he erected between prophecy and virtue.

By the end of the thirteenth century then, the dominant Dominican position on prophecy was that it could be seen in the quite ordinary workings of the Church, particularly among learned and wise preachers and teachers. This conception grew out of challenges such as Joachimism and out of ambiguities in the nature of prophetic inspiration itself. It is important, however, not to privilege thoroughly the Dominican strain of thought; there were other ways of responding to the same issues. To see this more clearly, I will use as a foil in the final section of this chapter the work of the Franciscan Peter John Olivi, which shows an alternative route prophecy took at the end of the thirteenth century. Unlike Bonaventure in the previous generation, Olivi was not accepted as a mainstream Franciscan, but that is the point; he embodies what Dominicans feared about prophecy and what theologians like Aquinas tried to constrain.¹⁵²

III. PETER JOHN OLIVI

A year after the death of Peter John Olivi (1248–98), his fellow Franciscans gathered for their general chapter at Lyons and condemned his writings, ordering them to be burned.¹⁵³ Two issues in particular concerned the leaders of the order. The first was Olivi's interpretation of the vow of poverty which Franciscans had sworn to uphold; the second was his suggestion that, contrary to the descriptions in the Gospel of John (19:31–4), Christ died *after* he was pierced in the side by a soldier's spear, not before. Poverty was certainly the more important issue for the Franciscans gathered in Lyons, but the latter, more curious claim—Olivi seems

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Ch. 1, pp. 47–8.

¹⁵¹ M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2008), p. 83.

¹⁵² Burr argues that Olivi was actually condemned for views very similar to Bonaventure's because Olivi was more explicitly Joachimist in his proposal of a threefold scheme of history and because of Olivi's ties to more radical Spiritual Franciscans: D. Burr, 'Bonaventure, Olivi and Franciscan Eschatology', in *Collectanea Franciscana*, 53 (1983), p. 39.

¹⁵³ Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans*, pp. 88–9.

to have been the first to put it in writing¹⁵⁴—would nonetheless continue to cause consternation, and not only within the Franciscan order.¹⁵⁵ The details of this dispute might seem recondite, but the conflict over the spear resulted from Olivi's theoretical underpinnings of prophecy, and it demonstrates precisely how contentious the issue of contemporary inspiration was.

As a theologian, Olivi was thoroughly grounded in the scholastic tradition, having studied in Paris in the 1260s when Bonaventure—Franciscan minister general from 1257 to 1273—was teaching there.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, Olivi was one of the leading lights among Franciscan thinkers in the generation after Bonaventure.¹⁵⁷ But Olivi also lived during the Franciscan Order's internecine struggles over poverty, which gave rise to the group known as Spiritual Franciscans, whose more rigorist attitude towards possessions and whose casting of Church authorities in an apocalyptic light ultimately led to the group's downfall in the fourteenth century.¹⁵⁸ Olivi was a casualty of these struggles: in particular, his views on poverty and his commentary on the Book of Revelation were troubling to powerful authorities.¹⁵⁹ He thus retained a persistent popularity with rebellious Spiritual Franciscans, a popularity which ultimately led Pope John XXII in the 1320s to his own condemnation of Olivi's work.¹⁶⁰

Olivi's views on prophecy and visions are usually read in the shadow of this condemnation and in relation to his controversial predecessor, Joachim of Fiore.¹⁶¹ Joachim's predictions of a new age certainly had a

¹⁵⁴ D. Burr, 'Olivi, Apocalyptic Expectation, and Visionary Experience', *Traditio*, 41 (1985), p. 273.

¹⁵⁵ Olivi's position on the spear was also condemned in 1312 by the Council of Vienne. See the accounts of Bonagratia of Bergamo, 'Series condemnationum et processuum contra doctrinam et sequaces Petri Iohannis Olivi', ed. L. Amoros, *AFH*, 24 (1931), p. 507; and of Giles of Rome, 'Impugnatio doctrinae Petri Iohannis Olivi an. 1311–2', ed. L. Amoros, *AFH*, 27 (1934), p. 408.

¹⁵⁶ Olivi heard Bonaventure deliver his *Collationes in Hexaemeron* in Paris: Burr, *Peaceable Kingdom*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ Boureau identifies Olivi, along with Aquinas and Henry of Ghent, as representing 'the apex of Scholastic theology': A. Boureau, *Satan the Heretic*, trans. T. Fagan (Chicago, 2006), p. 110. Olivi was lecturer in theology at Paris in 1279, then teaching in Montpellier (1285), Florence (1288), and then Montpellier once again.

¹⁵⁸ The most recent survey is Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans*.

¹⁵⁹ Burr's works, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty* (Philadelphia, PA, 1989) and *Peaceable Kingdom* provide detailed analyses of both these aspects.

¹⁶⁰ Burr's *The Persecution of Peter John Olivi* (Philadelphia, PA, 1976) examines Olivi's posthumous treatment. Olivi's reputation among Spirituals was so great that Angelo Clareno (d.1337) declared him to have been foretold by Joachim: *Liber chronicarum sive tribulationum ordinis minorum*, ed. G. Boccali (Assisi, 1999) VI.

¹⁶¹ This is Burr's approach in *Peaceable Kingdom*.

profound impact on Olivi's reading of the Book of Revelation and on Spiritual Franciscans' views of themselves as the harbingers of a radically transformed Church. But while Olivi's dependence on Joachim's ideas is undeniable, this dependence can also obscure other, equally significant, elements of Olivi's thought. Leaving aside Olivi's Apocalypse commentary, therefore, in which the Joachimist themes are most evident, I look instead at the text in which Olivi comes closest to producing a *De prophetia* treatise, namely his commentary on Isaiah, written around 1280, a few years after Aquinas's death, and I compare it to the work of another influential twelfth-century thinker rarely mentioned in connection to Olivi—Hugh of St Victor. Olivi would certainly have received from Bonaventure an outlook indebted to Victorine thought,¹⁶² but Olivi also engaged directly with many of Hugh's works.¹⁶³ Comparing Hugh and Olivi makes it possible to trace the influence of a particular notion of prophecy which had been less important to Dominicans, and which was ultimately tainted by its appeal to Joachimist thinkers, but which had its own significance. Olivi therefore represents in many ways the continuation of an underappreciated tradition in medieval prophetic thought, a tradition which recognized the fruitful relationship between contemplation, prophecy, and sacred history.¹⁶⁴

The relationship between prophecy and contemplation was ill-defined in the thirteenth century, just as in the twelfth.¹⁶⁵ For Gilbert of Poitiers, Peter Lombard, Humbert of Romans, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas, prophecy in its expanded, secondary senses—exegesis and preaching—had

¹⁶² C. Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Oxford, 2006), p. 8.

¹⁶³ Frans van Liere suggests Olivi may have had a 'personal connection' to the Abbey of St Victor: 'Andrew of Saint-Victor and His Franciscan Critics', in I. van 't Spijker (ed.), *The Multiple Meaning of Scripture: The Role of Exegesis in Early-Christian and Medieval Culture* (Leiden, 2009), p. 296. Sylvain Piron documents fewer citations of Hugh by Olivi than by his predecessors, arguing that this signals Hugh's declining influence as a source for scholastic debate now conducted more fully under Aristotelian auspices: 'Franciscains et victorins', in D. Poirel (ed.), *L'École de Saint-Victor de Paris* (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 525ff. My argument, however, is that Hugh's diminished usefulness on topics such as the nature of the will or of sin (Piron's examples) does not undermine his relevance for understanding Olivi's conceptions of history and of contemplation.

¹⁶⁴ Nicholas Watson, for instance, sidelines this tradition by distinguishing between two types of medieval mysticism: introduction in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism*, ed. S. Fanous and V. Gillespie (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 1–27. The first, the subject of his discussion, is what he calls the tradition of philosophical and spiritual exercises, which have as their goal the experience of divine love, and within which Watson includes Margery Kempe and Walter Hilton. The second is the tradition of Hildegard of Bingen and Bridget of Sweden, where an Old Testament model of prophecy (and apocalypticism) challenges the 'secularization' of contemplative experience that Watson identifies with the first type (p. 23). My claim is that the Victorine tradition contains the seeds of the second type as much as the first, and that Olivi unites them.

¹⁶⁵ Schlosser, *Lucerna*, pp. 122–6.

little to do with visions of the future, or, indeed, with any noticeable contemplative or mystical experiences. Rather than elevated rapture, such prophecy was fairly mundane. Olivi's ideas were different, and they emerged from his reading of Scripture in a Victorine vein. In one of his introductions to Scripture, he says that the *medium* or centre of Scripture and of history is Christ.¹⁶⁶ Olivi then describes how, in Exodus, Moses encountered this *medium*: God called Moses into a cloud on top of a mountain for forty days. This cloud, Olivi says, represents the experience Moses had of the 'loftiest height and highest abstraction' of the divine essence.¹⁶⁷ Such an experience could not have been attained without the denial of all entities and concepts, in an ascent along the *via negativa*. Nonetheless, Olivi grounds this abstract contemplative encounter, this denial of temporal experience, in an engagement with time. The ascent into the cloud can only occur, Olivi says, through knowledge of sacred history, of the temporal unfolding of God's plan as given in Scripture.¹⁶⁸ The knowledge of history Olivi has in mind is one bred by reading, meditation, and prayer, until one comes to love the way in which the story of sacred history unfolds. Ascent through this historical contemplation occurs only in an overflowing of love, more 'through affect than through intellect', through contemplative experience that is 'tasted', that is, through *gustus*.¹⁶⁹ Olivi, like Hugh, aims not at spontaneous rapture but at the disciplined cultivation of contemplative revelation.

Looking, furthermore, at the language with which Scripture narrates this sacred history, Olivi notes that it consists of veils (*velamina*) which must be opened.¹⁷⁰ Why is it veiled? Olivi at first gives several traditional answers: we need to begin with more familiar images; veils humble us; or their dissimilarity to God prevents us from idolizing an image. All these reasons were well-rehearsed by scholastic thinkers of the time, and Aquinas's discussion of the same issue in the opening question of the *Summa theologiae* contains essentially similar reasons.¹⁷¹ But Olivi emphasizes one

¹⁶⁶ *Principia quinque in sacram Scripturam*, ed. D. Flood and G. Gál, in *Peter of John Olivi on the Bible* (St Bonaventure, NY, 1997), 3.2, p. 78. Cf. Christ as central pillar of history for Hugh, Ch. 1, pp. 35–6; and also Bonaventure's discussion of Christ as *medium omnium scientiarum*: *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, OOB 5, I. For Augustine, Christ is the 'end of the ages', but for Bonaventure he is the centre: J. Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St Bonaventure*, trans. Z. Hayes (Chicago, 1971), pp. 16–17.

¹⁶⁷ *Principia*, 3.6, p. 79: 'summus superexcelsus et summa superabstractio'.

¹⁶⁸ *Principia*, 3.7, p. 80: 'there is no ascent or entrance...except after knowledge (*agnitio*) of the six-fold consideration and illumination of the divine works, which were done in the seven original days or in the six ages of the world (*saeculi aetates*)'.

¹⁶⁹ *Principia*, 3.7 p. 80: 'magis...affectualiter quam intellectualiter...in solo excessu amoris...magis per sensualem gustum quam per visualem aspectum'.

¹⁷⁰ *Principia*, 3.55, p. 100.

¹⁷¹ ST I 1a9.

reason that Aquinas does not give there: God did not want to lead the human race to perfection immediately (*subito*). So, God allowed for diverse stages of human history to emerge, not all at once (*simul*), but rather in proper order (*ordinate*) over time.¹⁷² Like Hugh of St Victor, Olivi concludes that history itself is a necessary obscurity in order to allow time to prepare for Christ.

Aquinas, of course, was aware of the importance of sacred history, but historical development as a gradual divine lesson is not as pronounced a theme in his writings. Although Aquinas does say that prophecy grew in stages, with a stage before the law, under the law, and under grace, he weakens this temporal progression by claiming that, in each stage, the best revelation happened earliest, and that when prophets spoke for the guidance of people, this revelation did not vary according to the passage of time but according to the needs of each period.¹⁷³ In each stage, certain prophets understood doctrine to the highest degree and taught it. This is different from a notion of increased excellence over time, of continual and gradual advancement.¹⁷⁴

For Olivi, Scripture takes into account people's specific historical states, gradually revealing more and more over time. Prophets are the necessary guideposts for that process, pointing ahead with their obscure symbols and prefigurations. Prophets' signs exist in particular for an interpreter who has been granted special illumination—a *vir illuminatus*—who might discern the prophets' intentions.¹⁷⁵ This notion of an illumined interpreter clearly comes from the traditional idea of exegete as inspired reader of Scripture, but Olivi's description of this reader reveals his determination to retain historical awareness as a central element of exegesis. The scriptural prophets, he says, are like painters who use colour to depict inner and outer meaning. Unless a spectator understands the underlying rational principle (*ratio*) and cause of these colours, he will not understand the whole picture:

He who does not know the rational principle of the images does not know how to draw anything of them from the image; indeed it would seem to him

¹⁷² *Principia*, 3.73, p. 105. Cf. Bonaventure, *Collationes* XIV.7–17.

¹⁷³ *ST* II-II 174.a6.co.; *ST* II-II 1.a7.

¹⁷⁴ In only one place have I found Aquinas using language similar to Olivi's, language which nonetheless emphasizes the difficulty of God's message rather than how historical development itself teaches: see *Lectura in Hebraeos*, *SEP*, I.1.10, ii, p. 338; trans. C. Baer, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (South Bend, IN, 2006), p. 10: '[Paul] touches upon the time of the handing down of this teaching (*doctrina*), which is time gone by, . . . that is, not all at once (*subito*), since such great things were said about Christ that they could not be believed unless they were learned over time (*cum incremento temporum*)'.

¹⁷⁵ *Principia*, 3.75, p. 108.

rather that the colours were placed confusedly and without any rational order and without any truth and utility of signification.¹⁷⁶

If the exegete does not enter into those principles and causes, confusion results:

If you stand, therefore, on the surface circumference of Scripture, many things will come upon you: composed of divisible things and multiform, variable and transitory...unconnected and scattered, irregular and immeasurable.¹⁷⁷

The *vir illuminatus* penetrates the surface to see the underlying rational order, held together by Christ, the centre of Scripture and of history.

When Olivi describes the superficial chaos of Scripture, he evokes not only the confusion of scriptural language but also the general chaos of history, variable and transitory. John of Salisbury had expressed in the previous century an Augustinian scepticism about discovering God's ways, comparing history to the complexity of a painting, which reveals only its outer appearance.¹⁷⁸ Olivi, however, has something quite different to say about the reading of history, picking up the line of argument put forward by Hugh of St Victor.¹⁷⁹ Just as the eye within, according to Hugh, must consider 'past, present, and future all at once (*simul*)', so, for Olivi, meditation on time provokes love and admiration for the unfolding of sacred history, qualities both Hugh and Olivi insisted were necessary for contemplative ascent.¹⁸⁰ If Hugh used prophetic perspective and adapted it to the contemporary contemplative practice he was promoting in the Abbey of St Victor, Olivi, in turn, applies a contemplative model similar

¹⁷⁶ *Principia*, 3.74, pp. 106–7: 'Qui autem nesciret rationem imaginum, nihil harum sciret ex imagine trahere; quin potius sibi videretur quod colores eius essent positi confuse et absque aliquo rationali ordine et absque ulla significationis veritate et utilitate'.

¹⁷⁷ *Principia*, 4.8, p. 129: 'Si igitur in superficiali Scripturarum circumferentia steteris, occurrent tibi multa: divisibilibus composita et multiformia; variabilia et transitoria... inconnexa et sparsa; irregularia et incommensurata'.

¹⁷⁸ *Policraticus I–IV*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, CCCM 118 (Turnhout, 1993) II.24, p. 139.

¹⁷⁹ Augustine compared sacred history not to a painting, which a viewer could integrate into a whole at one glance, but rather to a text, which needed hard work to be read and comprehended: *In Iohannis Evangelium*, ed. R. Willems, CCSL 36 (Turnhout, 1954) XXIV.2, pp. 244–5. Gregory the Great, on the other hand, explicitly compared Scripture to a painting made of patches of colour: *In Canticum canticorum*, ed. P.-P. Verbraken, CCSL 144 (Turnhout, 1963) IV, p. 5. For Gregory, it was easy to behold those patches fitting together all at once as a complete painting, which brought one directly to the deeper, spiritual meaning. Markus provides an insightful contrast between Gregory's optimistic use of the painting analogy and Augustine's rejection of it as an analogy for Scripture and sacred history: R. Markus, *Signs and Meanings: World and Text in Ancient Christianity* (Liverpool, 1996), pp. 62–70. Olivi will suggest that the picture can still be integrated—albeit with difficulties—because current history can be read in light of scriptural history.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Ch. 1, p. 31.

to Hugh's and uses it to show how contemporary spiritual insights can be part of a continuing tradition of prophecy.

With these principles, Olivi turned to his commentary on Isaiah. If history was for Hugh a way to heal the wounds of the Fall, Isaiah—rather than David—is for Olivi the prophet par excellence of that remedy, the prophet who best speaks of the consoling story of Christ, using history as a healing narrative.¹⁸¹ For Olivi, Isaiah's consoling power comes, not from particular doctrines he teaches people, but from the experience Isaiah conveys of peace and rest amidst the flux of time. Olivi writes,

that spirit [through which Isaiah had his vision] moved over all variability and fluxibility of time and temporal things and even creatures and those things to be created.¹⁸²

Accompanying this vision is the feeling or taste (*gustus*) of peace and stability as one passes through the flux towards Christ.¹⁸³ This is what Isaiah's vision offers to those reading or interpreting that vision.

The concept of consolation underpinned Hugh of St Victor's discussion of the search for stability in the face of mutability, and it was a central theme for many medieval discussions of prophetic understanding of history, since the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, was considered uniquely instrumental to consolation.¹⁸⁴ Prophecy, in this tradition, offers consolation for the tragic consequences of an immersion into time and history.¹⁸⁵ Medieval historians sought to offer the same consolation: Otto of Freising, for instance, believed consolation to be one of the functions of historiography, as a way of reminding people of the vicissitudes

¹⁸¹ Olivi names Isaiah *praeclarissimus prophetarum*: *Lectura super Isaiam*, ed. D. Flood and G. Gál, in *Olivi on the Bible*, p. 162. Olivi does not exalt David this way, not even in his Psalm commentary, nor, for that matter, does he mention Ezra at all: *Postilla super Psalmos*, Florence, BML, MS Conv. soppr. 240, fols 162v–179v.

¹⁸² *Super Isaiam*, p. 163: 'ille spiritus... ferebatur super omnem variabilitatem et fluxibilitatem temporum et temporalium et etiam creaturarum et creandorum'. The similarity to Hugh's use of the term 'flux of time' is no accident: Olivi also commented on Ecclesiastes. For Olivi, the vanity of the world also reveals false happiness, which Solomon shows 'through every circular and uniform flux (*fluxus*)': *Lectura super Ecclesiasten*, ed. J. Schlageter (Rome, 2003), p. 88.

¹⁸³ *Super Isaiam*, p. 195.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Ch. 1, p. 32.

¹⁸⁵ In addition to Isaiah, for instance, David's Psalms also console, as the *Glossa* on Ps. 1 noted: 'The Prophet, considering the future reparation of the human race through Christ, here as if led to the consolation of spirit (*ad consolationem spiritus*), proposes a sort of way through which he can be liberated' (ii, p. 458). Peter Lombard, however, showed how the nature of consolation could shift away from history: rather than suggesting that David's perspective on time and history consoled, Peter said consolation occurred through the reader's reflection on David's moral state and the possibility of rising from sin through penance (*In Psalmos*, praef., col. 57).

of fortune in the past so they could turn towards the eternal.¹⁸⁶ Olivi cites, in the preface to *Super Isaiam*, Augustine's *De civitate dei* (XVII.13), which explained that prophetic history uses the events of secular history to signify something beyond that history.¹⁸⁷ As Nicholas Trevet did for the ordering principles of the Psalms, so Olivi draws on the analogy of a stringed instrument's music to express the harmony and unity of prophetic writing.¹⁸⁸ But what Olivi has in mind is not the artificial mixing up of historical sequence in the service of poetic praise of God, but rather the natural mixing together of sacred and secular history unfolding in sequence together: prophetic history makes use of worldly elements in order to sing its song.¹⁸⁹ This is the consolation Isaiah offers.

Reversing the traditional belief in Isaiah's clarity, Olivi says Isaiah's vision does *not* convey a clear, unveiled (*absque velamine*) description of what was to come, because such clarity would mean Isaiah were writing history (*historia*) rather than prophecy (*prophetale vaticinium*).¹⁹⁰ Instead, Isaiah has to lay the seeds for things that would gradually grow to fruition: earlier times prepare for later ones. What Isaiah's prophecies do unveil is not doctrine but the wonderful rational principle (*ratio*) connecting past and present.¹⁹¹ The prophet's experience of this *ratio* and the later exegete's experience of *interpreting* that prophetic experience are both bound up with the contemplation of time and history, unfurling before their eyes:

Just as an eye atop the cone of a pyramid... at the same time and with a single gaze touches all things, not only the middle but the end lines of... the pyramid, ... so prophetic minds in the cone of eternity or of the contemplation of eternal things, elevated above temporal histories and the course of time, saw at the same time many things uniformly related to that cone.¹⁹²

This pyramid of eternity that Olivi postulates is, like Hugh's meditations on the pyramid of the ark, a way of gathering up temporal experience

¹⁸⁶ *Chronica*, ed. A. Hofmeister, SRG 45 (Hanover, 1912) II.prol.; III.prol.

¹⁸⁷ *Super Isaiam*, p. 164.

¹⁸⁸ Olivi explicitly cites Augustine's discussion of a lyre in *De civ.* XVI.2. Cf. Olivi's *Super Psalmos*, MS Conv. soppr. 240, fol. 162v, where the taste (*gustus*) of divine peace is produced by 'the touch and sound of all harmonic chords' ('omnium... cordarum armonicum tactum et sonum'). For Trevet, see Ch. 2, pp. 70–1; and cf. Ch. 1, p. 34 n. 88.

¹⁸⁹ *Super Isaiam*, p. 165.

¹⁹⁰ *Super Isaiam*, p. 252. For Jerome's statement on Isaiah's clarity, see Ch. 2, p. 55.

¹⁹¹ *Super Isaiam*, p. 254: 'mirabilis ordo et conexio et miranda harmonia et ratio'.

¹⁹² *Super Isaiam*, pp. 254–5: 'sicut oculus existens in cono pyramidis... simul et unico aspectu attingit omnes, tam medias quam terminales lineas... pyramidis, ... sic mentes prophetales in cono aeternitatis seu contemplationis aeternorum supra historias temporalium et supra decursus temporum elevatae, simul videbant multa tempora illo cono uniformiter correspondentia'.

without denying it, a way of understanding time and the succession of events by seeing the divine principle, divine connections, running through all of those events.¹⁹³

Olivi describes the *experience* of prophetic revelation in such detail because he believes it is still a live option. This pyramidal cone of contemplation is what the ancient prophets scaled in their visions, and the contemporary contemplative may still follow in their path. Such ascent, Olivi wants to insist, is not based on someone having clarity of doctrine, or on being able to abstract theological truths from the messy experience of time and history. The contemplative achieves the harmonious feeling of prophetic consolation precisely, as with Hugh's ark, from considering the interaction of sacred and secular history. When a prophet shows the way forward in the midst of the flux and confusion of history, this makes the connections between past, present, and future even more beautiful, Olivi says, like sun through a cloud.¹⁹⁴

Because a prophet must engage with the flow of time, Olivi insists that even the best prophets do not gain certain knowledge in a wholly rational sense—future contingents are not clearly visible. Rather prophets derive certainty from the affective comfort of their experience and from the knowledge it brings—in other words, from *gustus*.¹⁹⁵ This knowledge comes from a habitual (*habitualis*) disposition, which can see the fundamental principles of providence within history and then derive conclusions based on them, sometimes with certainty, sometimes with probable conjecture (*probabilis coniectura*).¹⁹⁶ Nonetheless, the prophet who has been illumined in head and heart knows that he cannot doubt his insight, even if he cannot prove it by human reason.¹⁹⁷ The experience is ultimately an encounter with God that transforms the mind through loving knowledge.

¹⁹³ When Joachim described visionary experience, he used an image analogous to the pyramid, that of the mountain, e.g. *Tractatus in expositionem vite et regule beati Benedicti*, ed. A. Patschovsky (Rome, 2008) II.3, pp. 176–7. Olivi's analysis, however, with its detailed discussion of the nature of the ascent up the pyramid has more in common with the Victorine model.

¹⁹⁴ *Super Isaiam*, p. 255.

¹⁹⁵ *Super Isaiam*, p. 195. *Gustus* was also part of Victorine contemplative theory. Cf., for instance, Hugh's *De archa Noe*, ed. P. Sicard, CCCM 176 (Turnhout, 2001) I.5, p. 28; trans., a Religious of CMSV, in Hugh of St Victor, *Selected Spiritual Writings* (New York, 1962), p. 68, where, immediately after speaking of rising to the top of the pyramid of the ark, Hugh writes: 'This is what it is . . . to find Him by knowledge and touch Him by taste (*gustus*)'.

¹⁹⁶ *Super Isaiam*, pp. 197–8. The prophetic habit is different from the habit (*habitus*) of obtaining truth through studious inquiry (*per inquisitionem*): *Quodlibeta* I.13, fol. 5v. *Ingenium* cannot create prophecy: *Super Ecclesiasten*, 8, p. 177.

¹⁹⁷ *Super Isaiam*, p. 195. This did not mean that prophets were enraptured. Olivi insists (*Super Isaiam*, p. 170), like Aquinas, that prophets knew what they were saying; they were not 'madmen' (*arrepiticii*).

Olivi's commentary on Isaiah stands in strong contrast to the statements about prophecy made by Dominicans of the previous generation. For Thomas Aquinas, divine revelation gave prophets certainty by elevating their minds not over time but above obscure veils, keeping their visions clear of confusing images. Albert the Great said that Isaiah had certain knowledge (*scientia*) of the Incarnation—not mistaken conjectures (*coniecturae fallaces*) derived from his own intellectual talent (*ingenium*)—which he then taught. It was this teaching, this *doctrina*, that consoled the reader, not the spiritual *gustus* of peaceful stability in the midst of the flux of history.¹⁹⁸ Isaiah's vision is no shadowy dream of the future.¹⁹⁹ There is a paradox here: Aquinas and Albert insist on greater certainty in their prophets even as they de-emphasize the elevation of their visions above time. Prophets receive doctrines not as historians, but as theologians.

Aquinas's emphasis comes, however, not from a dismissal of the importance of time, but rather from a heightened awareness of its influence. Though the soul is not totally overwhelmed by time, Aquinas rejects as a real possibility the attainment of a 'God's-eye view' in the Boethian—and Victorine and Olivian—model: history, for Aquinas, is present to God all at once, but *not* in any way people can be familiar with.²⁰⁰ Harm Goris claims that Aquinas is concerned to safeguard the mystery of God by reducing human access to atemporality: 'We only know of temporal presence, which is preceded by the past and will be followed by the future'.²⁰¹ Unlike Augustine, Aquinas does not see time as something to be overcome in consequence of the Fall, but rather as a necessity, simply 'the neutral measure of duration'.²⁰² People are embedded within time, so the general thrust of Aquinas's discussion keeps prophets on the ground, as teachers of doctrine and as ethical guides for the present. The perception of God's providence is not dependent on rising above time, but rather on co-existence with and experience of the temporal.

Olivi's argument that the prophet engages with time and history so as to overcome it is clearly indebted to Hugh of St Victor, but it is also clearly—and deliberately—opposed to a Thomistic view of prophecy as doctrinal, ethical, and homiletic. Indeed, viewed in the light of other attempts to rationalize time and reduce it to a question of physics, Olivi's commentary

¹⁹⁸ Albert the Great, *Super Isaiam*, pp. 2–3.

¹⁹⁹ *Super Isaiam*, p. 7. To have the clarity of history that Jerome said Isaiah had requires, for Albert, knowledge (*scientia*) of universal doctrines, not contingent events.

²⁰⁰ *Quodlibetales* X.q2.a1; *SCG* I.66.8; *ST I* 85.a4.ad1.

²⁰¹ H. Goris, 'Interpreting Eternity in Thomas Aquinas', in G. Jaritz and G. Moreno-Riaño (eds), *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse* (Turnhout, 2003), p. 201.

²⁰² Ratzinger, *Theology of History*, pp. 140–1. See also L. Elders, *The Philosophy of Nature of St Thomas Aquinas* (Frankfurt, 1997), pp. 340–4.

on Isaiah appears as an especially strong reaction to a form of scholastic rationalism. Olivi wrote his *Super Isaiam* three years after the 1277 Condemnations, which also targeted the perceived pernicious effects radical Aristotelian thought had on eschatology, in particular the positing of an eternal world.²⁰³ Alain Boureau has argued that the 1277 Condemnations are the 'revenge of Franciscan theology' against philosophy's attempts to render God rational.²⁰⁴ Read in this context, Olivi's words should be seen as his own contribution to the growing polemic against Aristotelians who were no longer concerned to look for spiritual signs of the end or the movement of sacred history, but who were concerned only with proving an eternal world.²⁰⁵ It was crucial to Olivi that history and time could still have spiritual meaning, still yield the secrets of God to those granted insight.

Both Aquinas and Olivi, therefore, promote post-scriptural forms of prophecy, but of different sorts. While Aquinas rejected habitual prophecy and its links to contemplation, he did accept its connection to preaching, and this point reveals a real contrast: preachers did not claim their gift gave them new revelations or made them holy. Olivi, on the other hand, accepts that prophecy can be a cultivated habit and, as a result, he draws conclusions very different from Aquinas. Aquinas referred all prophetic doctrine to Christ, while Olivi's greater estimation of an age of the Spirit offering historical progress makes him more eager to seek out new revelations. The only real progress in revelatory knowledge Aquinas accepted was that those after Christ had a fuller knowledge than those before, and even then, it was those *closer* to Christ ('Christo propinquiores') who were more fully instructed. They were better religious and ethical guides.²⁰⁶ Olivi prefers, on the other hand, to see contemplatives as the present-day representatives of the Old Testament prophets, representatives who were, unlike Aquinas's preachers and scholars, not merely distant, attenuated cousins of the visionaries of old. The experiences of the past can be directly

²⁰³ Gregory, 'Escatologia', pp. 167–8. See, for instance articles 9, 18, 87, 101, and 203 in *Condamnation*.

²⁰⁴ *Satan*, p. 5. Boureau says the result was the emphasis of will over reason, the liberation of God from the constraints of natural law. The 1279 general chapter of Franciscans at Assisi forbade the defence of any opinions which had been condemned by Tempier in 1277: M. Burbach, 'Early Dominican and Franciscan Legislation Regarding St Thomas', *Mediaeval Studies*, 4 (1942), p. 147.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Olivi's *Super Apocalipsim* in several passages cited by Gregory, 'Escatologia', pp. 170–2.

²⁰⁶ *ST* II-II 174.a6.resp. Aquinas also rejects the 'rashness' (*temeritas*) of those who equate the grace and glory of certain later saints with that of the apostles, who were greater because nearer to Christ: *In Ephesios*, 1.3.23, p. 8. Lubac reads in this a critique of excessive Franciscan devotion to Francis: *Postérité*, p. 150.

applied to the present: there is less of a gap for Olivi between the days of Scripture and the present, less of a culminating moment at Pentecost.²⁰⁷ The consequences were as important as they were far-reaching. Olivi looked to contemplatives in his own time for confirmation that ancient prophetic vision continued into the present age.

For most Dominicans, and indeed for many Franciscans, exegesis that was prophetic, that is, prophetic in a secondary sense, was ultimately about looking to the sacred texts of the past so as to speak about faith and morals in the present. This resulted in teaching and preaching, which fulfilled one's duties as a contemporary prophet.²⁰⁸ Olivi did not agree: to consider the prophetic mode fulfilled by moral guidance through preaching was a betrayal of the need for eschatology, the need to maintain a focus on the movement of salvation history.²⁰⁹ Placing Olivi's debt to Joachim within a wider intellectual context reliant on a Victorine model of prophecy makes it clear that Olivi turned away from moral prophecy, from the prophet as prudential guide, focusing instead on using exegesis to gain a prophetic perspective on history. Prophets were continually needed to keep interpreting sacred texts, a task which, for Olivi, required contemplation more than ethical homiletics. He believed that special people, contemplatives and saints, could develop an openness to this gift, confirmed by *gustus*. What did a prophet look like, then? A contemplative, a mystic of the present day.²¹⁰

Olivi has in mind here of course, Joachim of Fiore. Joachim's prophetic experience, Olivi says, was based on inspired general principles, followed often by conjecture (*coniectura*).²¹¹ Knowledge of future contingents cannot lead to genuine *scientia*, but this does not mean, as opponents claimed, that Joachim's understanding was purely human, or worse, demonic.²¹² Olivi

²⁰⁷ Olivi suggests in his *Quodlibeta* (II.9, fol. 17r) that both Old and New Testaments gave forth to the current age a *spiritualis intelligentia*. The New Testament also had to be read typologically, since it bore prophetic meaning for the future history of the Church ('futurum decursum ecclesie').

²⁰⁸ Bériou argues that, even for most Franciscans at the time, 'ordinary preaching is the exclusive mode of taking on the prophetic word': 'Saint François', p. 551.

²⁰⁹ Olivi certainly recognized that prophets used rhetoric for persuasion (*Super Isaiam*, pp. 179–80), but he did not see this as their primary function.

²¹⁰ Cf. Bonaventure's *Collationes* III.24–9, in which prophecy is the continuation of contemplation, obtained only by a few. Olivi does acknowledge that one cannot cultivate visions completely on one's own; his first remedy against spiritual temptations is not to desire supernatural visions, revelations, or feelings because these ultimately must come from God: *Remedia contra temptationes spirituales*, ed. R. Manselli, in *Spirituali e Beghini in Provenza* (Rome, 1959), p. 282.

²¹¹ *Super Isaiam*, pp. 197–8.

²¹² *Super Isaiam*, p. 198: 'a dyabolo vel a coniectura spiritus humani'. It is tempting to see Olivi's use of the term *coniectura* as a deliberate rejoinder to Aquinas and Albert, and to

wants to set at odds, on the one hand, academic *scientia*, and on the other, the understanding that comes from contemplation, an opposition perhaps derived either from Joachim or from Olivi's view of St Francis, whose inspired knowledge came from love and prayer more than from study.²¹³ The intellect can carry understanding only so far. And this, Olivi says, is the same experience that the ancient prophets had: even Daniel or John did not always understand completely the implications of their visions or what they were prophesying.²¹⁴ As contemplatives, some mystery always remained. In the same way, Joachim, weaving together sacred events amidst the shadowy flux of time, did not always understand perfectly the particulars of what he had seen. But the underlying general principles were still correct; he had seen the *ratio* of sacred history, the connections between past, present, and future.²¹⁵

Olivi's emphasis on the lack of omniscience in ancient prophets allows contemporary visionaries to claim the same elite prophetic status: Joachim can be placed on their level. Indeed, to bring contemporaries closer to ancients, Olivi remakes prophetic writers of the Hagiographic genre such as Solomon into contemplatives. Olivi's Solomon speaks of his vision in Ecclesiastes just as a 'divine contemplator considers the course of the world'.²¹⁶ In this context, wisdom (*sapientia*) discerns and meditates upon the diversity of times (*diversitas temporum*), namely, history.²¹⁷ Job, too, saw more clearly through contemplation (*contemplatio*) than he had earlier through faith, with greater *gustus* and *sensus*, though not perfectly.²¹⁸ Furthermore, to prove his claims about how a prophet such as Isaiah understood his visions, Olivi describes his own meeting with a holy contemplative (*persona sanctissima*). This person felt a particular *gustus* in the prophetic words (*locutiones prophetici*) which God placed in his heart.²¹⁹ Olivi, in other words, uses the first-hand report of contemporary contemplative experience to confirm his description of the

their source, Augustine, all of whom rejected apocalypticism as *coniectura*: see Ch. 3, pp. 106–7, and pp. 116, 144.

²¹³ On St Francis, see Olivi's *Expositio super regulam Fratrum Minorum*, ed. D. Flood (Wiesbaden, 1972), 10.F.4.b, p. 189. Cf. Bonaventure's *Legenda major*, OOB 8, 11, pp. 535–8, where Francis has divinely inspired knowledge of Scripture and of the future. For Joachim's opposition to *studium*, see p. 113.

²¹⁴ *Super Isaiam*, p. 196. Olivi describes this in greater detail in *Lectura super Genesim*, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS Conv. soppr. G 1.571, fols 121v–122r.

²¹⁵ *Super Isaiam*, pp. 197–8. Joachim was wrong, in Olivi's eyes, about the fifth period of Church history ending in 1200: *Super Apocalipsim*, cited in Burr, 'Olivi on Prophecy', p. 378.

²¹⁶ *Super Ecclesiasticen*, p. 104: 'divinus contemplator generaliter considerat cursum mundi'.

²¹⁷ *Super Ecclesiasticen*, p. 177.

²¹⁸ *Postilla super Job*, Florence, BML, MS Conv. soppr. 240, fol. 65v.

²¹⁹ *Super Isaiam*, p. 196.

experience of scriptural prophets. He posits a persistent historical connection between the scriptural past and the present day, rejecting the containment of the pure prophetic spirit to Scripture.²²⁰

Olivi is confident that the ascent to the top of the contemplative pyramid can happen now, and that contemplation will lead to insights, not only about personal moral and spiritual growth, but also about sacred history. This happened with Joachim and his vision of a third age of history. It also happened, Olivi says, with someone he spoke to himself about the wound in Christ's side. Olivi mentions a person in his commentary on John's Gospel (perhaps the same contemplative he spoke of in the Isaiah commentary), who revealed to him an order of events which was different from that related in the Gospel (in which Christ was already dead on the cross before being stabbed).²²¹ Olivi thus does not insist that prophetic contemplation focus on the future; it can, in fact, uncover new elements of the *past* narrative of sacred history. In this case, Olivi does not suggest the Evangelist is wrong, but rather that John's presentation of the sequence of events is misleading—the traditional interpretation should therefore give way to the contemporary one.²²² Contemplative insights can be *new* insights, both about the future and about the past, since the same Spirit inspired both Old Testament prophets and current ones. Not only do Joachim and other contemplatives have the advantage of historical position, but the Spirit now moves members of the Church in even greater ways than in the past. New insights into the events of sacred history can emerge—in this instance, a greater understanding of the Gospel of John. Olivi implies, then—and was indeed later accused of suggesting—that the current age is *better* than the apostolic one.²²³ When the entire shape of history becomes more evident *and* superior visions occur, it is little wonder if contemplatives can more easily discern the meaning of what has gone before and is to come. If mystics challenged the traditional understanding of John, that was only to be expected—and welcomed—in an age surpassing the apostolic one in knowledge.

Here, with his belief in a framework of progressively *improving* contemplative knowledge, Olivi finally parts ways with Hugh of St Victor and joins Joachim. Augustine had resisted the notion that post-scriptural

²²⁰ Burr establishes this point in 'Olivi on Prophecy', pp. 388ff. Cf. Olivi's claim that saints (*sancti*) experience their visions in the same way Job did his, receiving knowledge implicitly (*implicite*) which he could not grasp explicitly (*explicite*): *Super Job*, MS Conv. soppr. 240, fol. 65v.

²²¹ Extract published in F. Doucet, 'De operibus manuscriptis Fr. Petri Ioannis Olivi', *AFH*, 28 (1935), Appendix.

²²² Burr, 'Apocalyptic Expectation', pp. 273–4, explores more fully this reinterpretation.

²²³ Burr, *Persecution*, p. 86. For these accusations, see Ch. 5, p. 189.

revelations could be integrated into the larger sacred narrative. Hugh had not, and, as a result, his appreciation of novelty and his view of Christ as the mid-point of the keel of history have greater affinities with Olivi's ideas. Where Olivi goes beyond Hugh, however, is with Olivi's belief that he was himself at the beginning of the age of the Spirit, a period which had commenced with Joachim and with St Francis.²²⁴ One reason why the new interpretation of John's Gospel appealed to Olivi is that Francis had received all the wounds of the stigmata while alive.²²⁵ Thus, Francis becomes for Olivi a model for reading *Christ's* experience just as much as Christ is the model for reading Francis's. The new period of history is to be characterized by more widespread, more profound, and more intense spiritual understanding, through which the meaning both of Scripture and of apostolic poverty would become clearer. This new understanding—manifest in a profusion of visionary experiences—would spread to those who took delight in contemplation rather than in scholarship.²²⁶ Intellectuals who had neglected the principle that inspired exegesis required holiness on the part of the exegete would be replaced by those with a contemplative habit.²²⁷

Hugh believed that the passage of time had brought greater understanding because of a greater historical perspective—Hugh's inclusion of the *patres* as part of the New Testament and his expansion of sacred history beyond the age of the apostles are examples of this—but he never articulated that he was living in an age *qualitatively* different from that of the early Church, that is, that the nature of twelfth-century inspiration was of a higher quality.²²⁸ Olivi's thought shows tensions similar to Hugh's between the revelations of the past and the continual movement of history, but Olivi resolves these tensions with greater

²²⁴ See the citations from Olivi's *Super Apocalipsim* in Lubac, *Postérité*, pp. 152–3, in which Francis initiates 'quoddam novum saeculum seu nova Ecclesia'.

²²⁵ Burr, 'Apocalyptic Expectation', p. 279.

²²⁶ Olivi suggested that in the final age, the Spirit would not teach through texts but directly through contemplation, 'without the mystery of external voice or book': *Super Apocalipsim*, quoted by Burr, 'Apocalyptic Expectation', p. 281. The third age, marked by contemplation, would supersede the second age, marked by the scholarship of clerics ('Apocalyptic Expectation', p. 282).

²²⁷ Bonaventure expressed this principle succinctly in his *Collationes* XXII.20–1, p. 440; trans. J. de Vinck, *Collations on the Six Days, The Works of Bonaventure* 5 (Paterson, NJ, 1960), p. 351: contemplatives (*contemplativi*) use 'speculation' (*speculatio*) to examine Scripture, which is 'understood only by clean minds (*animi mundi*). For you cannot grasp the words of Paul unless you have the spirit (*spiritus*) of Paul: wherefore it is necessary that you be isolated in the desert with Moses and that you go up into the mountain (*ascendere in montem*)'.

²²⁸ See *De sacramentis* I.8.11, where Hugh speaks of three historical periods, with the current age of grace uniformly encompassing all time since Christ.

emphasis on the forward movement of history and progressive enlightenment within it. His model of prophecy looks to the continued importance of history as a subject for contemplative experience. Meditations on the past do not simply help one's own personal moral and spiritual growth; they also reveal new truths about sacred, providential history, and, as Joachim showed, reveal patterns for the future. Contemporary visionaries were thus the new prophets: their existence confirmed the progress of history, while their insights helped bring that progression about. Olivi's insistence on highlighting how these new signs of sacred history—these new visionaries—would alter the Church in the present contributed to his downfall.²²⁹ Hugh never posited an institutional transformation, while Olivi suggested that this historical progress, with its more widespread spiritual knowledge, would lead to a Church without hierarchy.²³⁰

It is unclear whether Olivi considered himself one of these new contemplatives, or just someone pointing the way towards them.²³¹ But for the Spiritual Franciscans who followed and who were eventually condemned by the Church, Olivi was indeed a prophet: he had predicted that the tension between carnal and contemplative minds would grow greater 'at the beginning of contemplative times'.²³² Thus, in the minds of Spirituals, he had prophesied both the swelling tide of visionaries and the persecutions accompanying them.²³³ Dominicans were often the

²²⁹ Cf. Ratzinger's claim that Olivi draws into the present what Bonaventure kept in the future: this postponement of the eschatological was 'the real distinguishing characteristic of Bonaventure's view, setting him off from the Spirituals', *Theology of History*, p. 237 n. 64.

²³⁰ Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans*, pp. 88, 211. Olivi's *Remedia* suggests that proper discernment (*discretio*) of spirits can justifiably lead one to ignore the advice of superiors, regardless of their devotion or understanding (*intellectus*): pp. 286–7.

²³¹ Burr argues that Olivi did not see himself as a prophet: 'Apocalyptic Expectation', pp. 286–7. On the other hand, Olivi defended himself from accusations similar to those he says were levelled at Joachim. Responding to the 1282 Council of Strasbourg's condemnation of him, Olivi rejected claims that he followed 'insane dreams of augurs' (*insana augurum sompnia*) and certain fantastic visions (*fantasticae visiones*) and predictions of the future: 'Une lettre inédite de Pierre de Jean Olivi', ed. F. Gratien, *Études Franciscaines*, 29 (1913), p. 421. Olivi said he only followed visionaries who were consonant with orthodoxy and constant in their inner taste (*gustus*) and sense. He hints at his own inspiration but claims not to be a seer (*vates*), instead referring to himself in terms much like Aquinas's marginal prophets: 'non ut vates propheticus, set [*sic*] instinctu interioris spiritus inspiratus' (pp. 416–17). Olivi further states that he must make conjectures of future particulars ('coniecturas particularium futurorum'), though such knowledge cannot be certain (pp. 421–2). He even suggests he has special knowledge about the future of the Franciscan order: not the particular details of history ('particulares determinaciones temporum et eventuum') but the universal (*universale*) direction of the future (p. 421).

²³² *Expositio in Canticum canticorum* ed. J. Schlageter (Rome, 1999), p. 126: 'circa initiationem contemplativorum statuum'.

²³³ Burr notes that Olivi moved among and was read by Franciscans particularly open to visionaries, including Pier Pettinaio and Clare of Montefalco: 'Apocalyptic Expectation', p. 278. In 1312 at the Council of Vienne, Franciscan conventuals attacked Olivi's

means of those persecutions, especially in the area of southern France where Olivi's ideas most took hold.²³⁴ This belief in a surge of visions became 'a major element within Christian culture' at the end of the thirteenth century.²³⁵ The Spiritual Franciscans promoted what has been called the 'institutionalization of ecstasy',²³⁶ and after Olivi's death, they used visions as a way of countering the authority of learned scholarship with that of the Spirit.

IV. CONCLUSION

The thirteenth century thus presents two models for the direction prophetic authority could take, two ways it could broaden and spread. Aquinas's theories point towards an intellectual, moral, and homiletic authority, while Olivi's point towards a contemplative, affective, and eschatological one. This dichotomy was not precisely along the lines Olivi proposed—the scholar versus the contemplative—but it often mirrored that division. The growing swell of visionaries made it all the more necessary for theologians to determine the relationship of visionary experiences to prophetic authority, and, ultimately, to determine the bearing such experiences had on the providential narrative of sacred history. With Joachimist interpretations of history still influential, the early fourteenth century saw some of the fiercest battles over prophecy, as well as new manifestations of it. I turn in my final two chapters to focus on these developments.

predictions of an increase of visionaries, and accused Spiritual Franciscans of promoting 'dreams and fictitious visions' (*sompnia vel fictae visiones*) and of believing Olivi's writings to be inspired by the Holy Spirit: H. Denifle and F. Ehrle (eds), *Archiv für Literatur- und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters*, ii; iii (Berlin, 1885–1900), p. 370; pp. 102, 119.

²³⁴ All the inquisitors were Dominican in Languedoc: L. Burnham, *So Great a Light, So Great a Smoke: The Beguin Heretics of Languedoc* (Ithaca, NY, 2008), p. 27. Vauchez claims that the sense of entering a new age was strongest in Provence beginning c.1250: *Saints*, pp. 109–10.

²³⁵ R. Lerner, 'Ecstatic Dissent', *Speculum*, 67 (1992), p. 52.

²³⁶ Burr, 'Bonaventure, Olivi', p. 33.

5

Nicholas Trevet and the Consolation of Prophecy

The Thomistic model of prophetic functions in the Church—in contrast to Peter John Olivi's promotion of visionaries distrustful of *studium*—encouraged a form of inspiration more closely related to intellectual insight, wisdom, and prudential action in the world. This form of prophetic authority closely aligns with the claims early Italian humanists would make at the beginning of the fourteenth century for their own authority as inspired and learned poets and interpreters of poetry. These claims initiated recurring debates between humanists and scholastically-trained Dominicans, debates which have created a misleading picture of the relationship between these two groups, who are often pitted against each other as antagonists. With regard to prophetic inspiration, in fact, a convergence of interests was possible, as the work of Nicholas Trevet (c.1258–c.1334) shows. Trevet's further shaping of the Dominican model of prophecy made him a highly influential bridge between the two groups. Trevet stripped away the extraordinary, revelatory aspects of prophetic experience, focusing instead on ethical judgement and the ability to offer consolation for suffering.

Trevet was trained at the University of Paris, and he excelled at scriptural interpretation, a skill which eventually gained him the direct support of Pope John XXII.¹ Yet Trevet was also by far the Dominican order's most valued and intrepid classical scholar.² A master at Oxford by 1314 and prior of Blackfriars, London by 1324, he was a schoolman with

¹ The paucity of manuscripts for Trevet's exegesis led Jeremy Catto to claim that they were little read: J. I. Catto, 'Theology and Theologians 1220–1320', in *The History of the University of Oxford*, i, ed. J. I. Catto: *The Early Oxford Schools* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 514–15. Trevet's patrons, however, are evidence of keen interest in the highest ecclesiastical circles of Avignon: John XXII requested a copy of Trevet's Genesis commentary (c.1317), and the extant Psalm commentary manuscripts (in both England and Italy) also suggest Avignon origins: B. P. Shields, introduction in 'A Critical Edition of Selections from Nicholas Trivet's *Commentarius literalis In Psalterium*' (Rutgers University, PhD dissertation, 1970), pp. 53–4.

² Catto, 'Theology', p. 513.

an active interest in ancient letters and culture; if his goal was not the early humanists' revival of classical style, many of his concerns were nonetheless similar to theirs.³ His desire to shed light on neglected, obscure, or difficult texts is evident: he was the first medieval writer to gloss Livy's *Ab urbe condita*, Seneca's tragedies, Seneca the Elder's *Declamations*, and Augustine's *City of God*. His commentary on Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* attracted the attention of Cardinal Nicholas Albertini of Prato, Dean of the College of Cardinals in papal Avignon and a figure connected to the burgeoning humanist movements in both Avignon and Italy. Towards the end of his life, Trevet turned more and more to the writing of history, both local (on the Angevin dynasty) and universal (in Latin and Anglo-Norman). With this body of work, he helped create the 'intellectual currents' which flowed from England to Avignon.⁴

Despite the great esteem his contemporaries had for him, Trevet has been largely neglected by modern scholars: apart from interest in his conception of tragedy and renewed attention to his Boethius commentary, the bulk of research on this Dominican scholar is over fifty years old.⁵ Beryl Smalley rightly noted that Trevet's classical glossing consists mainly of basic explanations, concluding that the real significance of them is 'that they were written at all'.⁶ Yet, Trevet was a learned man ('a true polymath')⁷ and a fount for later humanistic endeavours because of his own confluence of interests—from discussions of poetic philosophy and temporal mutability in Boethius, to tragic poetry in Seneca, prophetic knowledge

³ Roberto Weiss argues that Trevet's scholarship is not humanist: *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century*, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1967), p. 10. While this is true with regard to a focus on classical style, Trevet's work clearly reveals a higher degree of devotion to classical learning than does his contemporaries', aligning him with the interests of humanist scholarship, which attached 'the greatest importance to classical studies': P. O. Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and its Sources* (New York, 1979), p. 87.

⁴ K. Tachau, introduction in Robert Holcot, *Seeing the Future Clearly: Questions on Future Contingents*, ed. K. Tachau (Toronto, 1995), p. 2. Tachau is describing Holcot's circle of scholars, but the idea is even more applicable to Trevet a generation earlier.

⁵ Recent discussions of Trevet and tragedy include V. Gillespie, 'The Study of Classical Authors: From the Twelfth Century to c.1450', in *CHLC*, pp. 209–10, 220–2; and H. A. Kelly, *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 125–34. On Trevet and Boethius, see the attempts made by Lodi Nauta and Alastair Minnis to bridge the gap between Trevet's literary and scholastic works, e.g., A. J. Minnis and L. Nauta, 'More Platonico loquitur: What Nicholas Trevet really did to William of Conches,' in A. J. Minnis (ed.), *Chaucer's Boece and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 1–33; and Nauta, 'The Scholastic Context of the Boethius Commentary by Nicholas Trevet,' in M. J. F. M. Hoenen and L. Nauta (eds), *Boethius in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 41–67.

⁶ B. Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1960), p. 59.

⁷ *English Friars*, p. 58.

in the Psalms, and the grand scope of universal history in his *Historia*. In light of Trevet's persistent enthusiasm for previously unglossed texts, Jeremy Catto has emphasized Trevet's 'independence' from the speculative debates of the Oxford of his day.⁸ Nonetheless, if Trevet's heart lay with the ancients, he was still well-informed about the contemporary currents of theological debate, particularly on the subject of inspiration.⁹

This chapter examines Trevet's contribution to the reformulation of scholastic prophecy within the context of three important, and overlapping, periods: first, polemical disputes in Paris around the year 1300 concerning apocalyptic prophecy; second, the increased interest in classical texts, especially Seneca, during the 1310s, highlighted by the career of Cardinal Nicholas Albertini of Prato, who moved between Italy and the papal court at Avignon; and third, the tense debates in Avignon over the Spiritual Franciscans, which culminated in the 1320s during the papacy of John XXII. These contexts shed light on the nature of Trevet's reflections on prophecy and on *visio*—how people encountered and knew God. Trevet considered the nature of sacred vision, theological understanding, and history's consolations in his commentary on Boethius (1300/1303). Trevet's Psalm commentary (c. 1315) reveals his reading of prophetic texts as if they were poetic songs, drawing their sacred power from the harmonies of verbal ordering.¹⁰ His glosses on Seneca's tragedies (1314–17), furthermore, brought together his ideas about Boethian and Davidic inspiration in ways that fit well with new intellectual and cultural developments at Avignon, and that also pointed towards humanist poetic theology. More clearly than with most other Dominicans of his time, Trevet's works reveal a conception of prophecy closely related to both historical and poetic knowledge, which points to the uneasy status which prophetic phenomena held for a person who was simultaneously immersed in scholastic theology, classical letters, and history.

I. THE VISION OF BOETHIUS

Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* is at first glance an odd place to look for ideas about prophecy: there is no explicit mention of prophets in the text, nor does the work engage with elements of salvation history. At the same time, Boethius' themes—seeking consolation by recognizing the

⁸ 'Theology,' pp. 121, 299–300.

⁹ Nauta's 'Scholastic Context' stresses Trevet's engagement with contemporary ideas.

¹⁰ See Ch. 2, pp. 70–1.

relationship between providence and history, between the mutability of things and the unchanging eternal—were also the themes of prophetic writing, and this connection was, significantly, drawn out by Boethius' medieval commentators. That Boethius, furthermore, wrote in alternating sections of prose and verse also raised questions about the relationship of poetic expression to the transcendent understanding of God. The *Consolation* has the further advantage of being one of the most widely-read texts in the Middle Ages, by clerics and lay people alike, particularly from the twelfth century to the beginning of the fourteenth.¹¹ To understand Trevet's conception of prophecy, and of poetry's relationship to it, his *Consolation* commentary—one of his earliest works—is the place to begin.

Trevet's *Expositio super Boecio de consolatione philosophiae*, composed for his fellow Dominicans sometime from 1300 to 1303, drew on a lengthy tradition of commentary on the work.¹² The glosses attributed to the Benedictine Remigius of Auxerre (d. c.908) spurred successors, but there was no definitive standard until William of Conches's popular early twelfth-century commentary.¹³ Even with greater attention given in the thirteenth century to the influx of Aristotelian texts, Boethius remained important, especially because, as the author of works on arithmetic, logic, rhetoric, music, and theology, he was an authority for most of the liberal arts curriculum.¹⁴ Although advances in logic and the professionalization of theology, among other things, helped lessen Boethius' grip on the university curriculum, the popularity of the *Consolation*, at least, persisted

¹¹ Nauta, "Magis sit Platonicus quam Aristotelicus": Interpretations of Boethius's Platonism in the *Consolatio Philosophiae* From the Twelfth to the Seventeenth Century', in S. Gersh and M. J. F. M. Hoenen (eds), *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages* (Berlin, 2002), p. 165. Fabio Troncarelli claims that during this period, the *Consolation* became 'an integral part of the general cognitive patrimony of the intellectual and the common man': *Boethiana aetas: Modelli grafici e fortuna manoscritta della 'Consolatio philosophiae' tra IX e XII secolo* (Alessandria, 1987), p. 125.

¹² R. J. Dean, 'The Dedication of Nicholas Trevet's Commentary on Boethius', *Studies in Philology*, 63 (1966), pp. 598–9; and B. S. Donaghey, 'Nicholas Trevet's Use of King Alfred's Translation of Boethius, and the Dating of his Commentary', in A. J. Minnis (ed.), *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of De consolatione philosophiae* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 3–11.

¹³ For convenience, I refer to Remigius as the glosses' author. For more on these glosses, see R. Love, 'The Latin Commentaries on Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae* from the 9th to the 11th centuries', in N. H. Kaylor and P. E. Phillips (eds), *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2012), pp. 103–21. Nauta dates William's commentary to c.1120: introduction in William of Conches, *Glosae super Boetium*, CCCM 158 (Turnhout, 1999), p. xxiv.

¹⁴ P. Courcelle, *La Consolation de la Philosophie dans la tradition littéraire* (Paris, 1967), pp. 68ff.

in the fourteenth century, and it even took on new life among lay readers: translations and adaptations (in addition to pedagogical use) abound.¹⁵

Trevet's commentary became the new standard and his most popular work: it survives in over 100 manuscripts, in contrast to only five, for instance, of William of Aragon's, its next best-known contemporary.¹⁶ Trevet's work diffused rapidly across Europe, including to Italy by 1307, where it soon became the most influential *Consolation* commentary.¹⁷ Both scholastic thinkers and humanist educators there turned to Boethius, and when they did, they also turned to Trevet for assistance.¹⁸ As Lodi Nauta remarks, 'What the *glosa [sic] ordinaria* was for biblical commentators Trevet's work was for commentators on the *Consolation*'.¹⁹

There are several key moments in the *Consolation* that provide Trevet with particularly fruitful material for reflections on Boethian ideas of vision, on poetic theology, and on people's relationship to the flux of time. The first moment occurs in the commentary's prologue, the *accessus* to the text.²⁰

¹⁵ J. Marenbon, *Boethius* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 164–8, 175; Nauta, 'Some Aspects of Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae* in the Renaissance', in A. Galonnier (ed.), *Boèce ou la chaîne des savoirs* (Louvain, 2003), pp. 767–78. Nauta rejects Courcelle's claim (*Consolation*, pp. 318, 323ff.) that scholastic commentaries hindered the reception of the text. Troncarelli documents not only translations—into, e.g., Provençal, Catalan, Italian—but also traces of the text in sermons, epistles, etc., throughout Europe: *Boethiana aetas*, p. 125. For the use of Boethius as a school text, see R. Black and G. Pomaro, *Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Education* (Florence, 2000). In theology, the thirteenth century showed comparative neglect of Boethius as an authority, with Thomas Aquinas a major exception; only he commented on Boethius' *opuscula sacra* such as *De trinitate*: Marenbon, *Boethius*, p. 172. The *Consolation* was included as a university textbook in the Faculty of Arts in Paris for the study of ethics, until its replacement by Aristotle and removal from the mandatory list of books by the mid-fourteenth century; it also appears to have been read as part of Oxford's curriculum in the early fourteenth century: C. H. Kneepkens, 'The Reception of Boethius' *De Consolatione* in the Later Middle Ages', in Galonnier (ed.), *Boèce*, pp. 715–17.

¹⁶ A. J. Minnis, 'Aspects of the Medieval French and English Traditions of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*', in M. T. Gibson (ed.), *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence* (Oxford, 1981), p. 314; M. T. Gibson, 'Codices Boetiani', *Revue d'histoire des textes*, 14–15 (1984–5), pp. 73–4.

¹⁷ L. Nauta, 'The *Consolation*: The Latin Commentary Tradition, 800–1700', in J. Marenbon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 265, 267–8. In Italy, the jurist Tholomeus de Asinariis used Trevet in 1307, as did Guillelmus de Cortemilia by the 1320s.

¹⁸ Black and Pomaro demonstrate the persistent interest in Boethius and the persistent use of Trevet as an aid in humanist education, establishing that Boethius is 'the most widely and intensively studied school author' in late medieval and early Renaissance Florence: *Boethius's Consolation*, pp. 3. This is contrary to Anthony Grafton's assertion that humanists were uneasy with or uninterested in the text: see 'Epilogue: Boethius in the Renaissance', in Gibson (ed.), *Boethius*, pp. 410–24.

¹⁹ 'Commentary Tradition', p. 265.

²⁰ I have consulted Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. G. 187, as well as the unpublished critical edition by E. T. Silk. I cite from Silk's text, now available online: <http://campuspress.yale.edu/trevet/>.

Relying on a substantial tradition of Boethian *vitae*, Trevet draws a picture of a Christian martyr, a man of great erudition who wrote *opuscula* in defence of the Catholic faith before resisting the tyranny of the Arian Theodoric, who exiled him, jailed him in Pavia, and then killed him for his faith. Trevet incorporates the association popular in his time between Boethius and St Severinus—‘he is counted in the catalogue of saints under this name’—but with scholarly qualifications: ‘as some say’.²¹

William of Conches’s *accessus* to the *Consolation* describes the text as a work of ‘philosophica consolatio’ against the mutability of fortune.²² Its purpose or *utilitas* was to prevent people from either being lifted up or thrown down by fortune’s prosperity or adversity, and in this regard, it belonged to the part of philosophy known as ethics.²³ Trevet does not disagree, but he goes further than William in linking the *Consolation* and its author to a distinctively sacred purpose. Trevet’s *accessus* is another example of the ways in which the academic *accessus* narrowed the boundaries between sacred and secular literature, for he begins his explanation of the *Consolation*’s purposes with a quotation from the Psalms (93:19), ‘Your consolations (*consolaciones*) have gladdened my soul’.²⁴ Trevet situates his analysis within the framework of this sacred verse, uttered by the prophet and poet David—a framework not used by his predecessors—and he refers his entire commentary back to it.

The application of this verse from the Psalm, however, is ambiguous. Are we to imagine Boethius seeking *consolaciones* from God rather than philosophy?²⁵ Trevet states that Boethius used these words of David to

²¹ *Super Boecio*, prol., p. 10: ‘sub isto nomine in cathalogo sanctorum connumeratur . . . ut quidam dicunt’. Of the *vitae* surveyed in R. Peiper, introduction in Boethius, *Philosophiae consolationis libri quinque* (Vienna, 1934), the earliest that explicitly links Boethius and Severinus dates only from the thirteenth century: p. xxxv. For the Christianization of Boethius (and resistance to it) leading up to the twelfth century, see Troncarelli, *Boethiana aetas*, pp. 116–28. Cf. Vincent of Beauvais, whose summary of the *Consolation* precedes the *gesta* of St Severinus: *Speculum maius*, iv, XXI.21, col. 825.

²² *Super Boetium*, prol., p. 4.

²³ *Super Boetium*, prol., p. 5. ‘Ethics’ was the standard designation for all secular literature, in so far as it needed justification for being read, and it was used frequently for the *Consolation*. Conrad of Hirsau (c.1070–c.1150), for instance, says, ‘It is placed under ethics (*ethicae subponitur*), because nothing pertains more to good behaviour than to be a just man amidst the mutability of things (*mutabilitas rerum*) and to hasten to enjoy the highest good’: *Dialogus*, p. 108.

²⁴ *Super Boecio*, prol., p. 7.

²⁵ That was the belief of a thirteenth-century illuminator of the *Consolation* commentary of the Anonymous Erfurtensis: in Book I metre 5, where Boethius laments that he cannot see the guiding hand of divine providence, the illuminator depicted Boethius on his knees praying to Christ. See Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 174, fol. 11r. Cf. the eleventh-century Provençal version of the *Consolation* which portrays Boethius in prayer to God, seeking help: ‘Lord Father! in whom I have so much trusted | in whose mercy stand all sinners | my muses who have lost their song | I was going to sing of wisdom! | I weep all the

address, not Christ, but Philosophy: 'by directing as fitting a speech as he was able to Philosophy, saying *Your consolations*'.²⁶ Thus, the theological consolation sought because of injustice in the world (the context of the psalmist's cry) becomes Boethius' as well, but the prophetic voice is interwoven with the philosophical, with Boethius addressing Philosophy as David did God. Trevet's Boethius ultimately learns to bear misfortune with patience, until he can utter more words from the Psalms (118:52): 'I remembered, O Lord, thy judgments of old, and I was comforted (*consolatus*)'.²⁷

Compared to the opening of the Englishman William Wheteley's 1316 commentary prologue, Trevet's distinctive framework is striking.²⁸ Wheteley begins with a line from Seneca, highlighting the purely philosophical nature of Boethius' work: 'You ought to serve Philosophy, so that true freedom is granted you'.²⁹ Trevet places the *Consolation* in a different setting entirely: his emphasis is on the book as a response to a real emotional and spiritual need brought on by questions about God's providential plan. It is a book that seeks (and offers) the consolation which prophets offer, a book that therefore seems to function in the same way the Psalms do, with Boethius as a new David. Prophetic consolation is largely the consolation of sacred history, the promise of harmony and peace in the face of disorder and suffering. In Trevet's interpretation, Boethius, enlightened by divine wisdom (*divina sapiencia*),³⁰ offers a similar consolation, and it is presumably this conception of the *Consolation* that helped

day' ('reclama deu, de céi lo rei, lo grant: | domine pater, e tem fiav' eu tant, | e cui marce tuit peccador están; | las mias musas qui ant perdut lor cant | de sapiencia anava eu ditan. | plor tota dia'): F. Hündgen, ed., *Das altprovenzalische Boëthiuslied* (Oppeln, 1884), p. 9; trans. H. R. Patch, in *The Tradition of Boethius* (New York, 1935), pp. 14–15.

²⁶ *Super Boecio*, prol., p. 7: 'ad philosophiam dirigendo sermonem convenientem uti potuit verbis preassumptis dicens *Consolaciones tue*'.

²⁷ *Super Boecio*, prol., pp. 7–8: 'memor fui iudiciorum tuorum a seculo, domine, et consolatus sum'.

²⁸ Wheteley, who was familiar with Trevet's commentary, is sometimes confused with Ps-Thomas Aquinas, who was most likely a fifteenth-century German: Minnis, 'Medieval French', p. 315 n. 23. Unfortunately, the editors of Aquinas's Parma *Opera omnia* vol 24 have printed Ps-Thomas's commentary under Wheteley's name, and Courcelle conflates the two commentators (*Consolation*, pp. 322–3, 414–15).

²⁹ Oxford, Exeter College, MS 28, fol. 68v: 'Philosophiae servias oportet, ut tibi contingat vera libertas'. Cf. Seneca's *Epistolae morales ad Lucilium*, ed. L. D. Reynolds (Oxford, 1965) 1.8.7. Cf. also William of Aragon, who begins his commentary with a quote from Aristotle's *Politics*: 'everything desires the good' ('omnia appetunt bonum'): 'Edición crítica de los comentarios de Guillermo de Aragón al "De Consolatione Philosophiae" de Boecio', ed. C. Olmedilla Herrero (Universidad Complutense, Madrid, PhD thesis, 1997), p. 1. I thank Dr Olmedilla Herrero for supplying me with a copy of her edition.

³⁰ *Super Boecio*, prol., p. 9.

popularize the work (especially in vernacular translation) throughout the fourteenth century.

It is also worth noting that Trevet not only reads Boethius in light of the Psalms, but he reads the Psalms in light of Boethius. In Trevet's Psalm commentary (c.1315), glossing Ps. 72:11–12, in which people ask God why sinners prosper in the world, Trevet notes that David deals with this important question by showing that one must look to one's true end if one is to keep faith. This, Trevet says, is what Boethius was trying to show.³¹ Trevet was not the only scholastic theologian to use Boethius to interpret scriptural authors, especially wise hagiographers: Bonaventure ends his Ecclesiastes commentary by equating Solomon and Boethius as discerning interpreters of God's ways.³²

Trevet's prologue highlights how Boethius could be granted special status as inspired philosopher, in ways that resisted the larger thirteenth-century trend of separating philosophy and theology.³³ Certainly, Trevet's description of Lady Philosophy makes it clear that she is not Theology: her practical and theoretical components consist of, on the one hand, ethics, economics, and politics, and on the other, metaphysics, physics, and mathematics.³⁴ In contrast, William of Conches posits the same practical elements, but his theoretical ones are 'theologia, mathematica, physica'.³⁵ Twelfth-century thinkers had granted Boethius both philosophical and theological authority, often on the level of the Church Fathers.³⁶ Boethius' *opuscula sacra* were considered evidence of great theological erudition, and even of special insight: Gilbert of Poitiers described him, in the prologue to his commentary on the *De trinitate*, as one who knew the secrets of seers ('videntium . . . archana'), thus reaching the hidden things of higher theology ('secreta theologie altioris').³⁷

³¹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 738, fol. 128. Cf. *De consolatione philosophiae*, ed. L. Bieler (Turnhout, 1984) I.p6.

³² *Commentarius in librum Ecclesiasticæ*, OOB 6, p. 99.

³³ Boethius' inspired status complicates Minnis's claim that Trevet's commentary follows this trend: see A. J. Minnis, *Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 10–11.

³⁴ *Super Boecio* I.p1, pp. 32–3.

³⁵ *Super Boetium*, prol., p. 31.

³⁶ M. Lemoine, 'Boèce, modèle du philosophe?', in Galonnier (ed.), *Boèce*, pp. 613–24, documents twelfth-century opinions, including Peter Lombard's placement of him as an authority alongside Augustine and Isidore in *Sententie in IV libris distinctæ*, ed. Collegium S. Bonaventuræ (Grottaferrata, 1971–81) IV.1.d33.c1.3.1.1. An eleventh-century manuscript printed by Troncarelli says Boethius' book was also called the *Liber Soliloquiorum*, because, like Augustine, he rationally controlled his sensuality, thus strengthening himself against transitory things and thereby imitating the Book of Ecclesiastes, described as a dialogue between a sick complainant and a consoling *Sapientia: Boethiana aetas*, pp. 292–3.

³⁷ *Expositio in Boecii librum primum De Trinitate*, ed. N. Häring, in *The Commentaries on Boethius* (Toronto, 1966), prol. I.1.4–5, pp. 53–4. Cf. Bernard of Clairvaux's statement that prophets contemplate the *arcana dei*: Ch. 3, p. 96 n. 41.

In the thirteenth century, as debates about the relationship of philosophy to theology grew more heated, Boethius was often caught in the middle. Chenu identifies a qualifying label that developed among commentators in the second half of the twelfth century, which described Boethius as more philosopher than theologian—*magis philosophus quam theologus*—a label that attempted to keep theological thought separate from autonomous philosophical reason.³⁸ Speculation about the special nature of Boethius' knowledge created a corollary image: he gained a reputation for consorting with demons. Roland of Cremona, OP, in his lecture course on theology at Paris (1229–30), refers to Boethius as 'great in authority in philosophy and theology' and writes the following of him:

it is said of demons that they can suddenly and most quickly instruct a man in any science and that they can teach in the shortest space of time logic or astronomy. Thus it is said that some gave themselves to demons in obedience so they would teach them, and they quickly became wise. Whence some say that this is true of Boethius because he quickly learned philosophy.³⁹

Ephrem Filthaut, who discovered this text, claimed to have found no other evidence for this proto-Faustian tradition of Boethius apart from this reference, yet Trevet himself acknowledges something of the sort while defending his author: 'those things which Boethius did through philosophic wisdom they were saying that he did through magic art'.⁴⁰

Even as theologians in the thirteenth century promoted a separation of philosophy and theology, however, Trevet's prologue demonstrates that Boethius' situation mirrored that of the ambiguous category of prophet, which could find itself within both disciplines, reuniting those disciplines

³⁸ *La Théologie comme science au XIII^e siècle*, 3rd edn (Paris, 1957), p. 154. Even in the late thirteenth century, however, Boethius was still considered by some to be a *theologus*, as the contents of a manuscript such as Padua's Biblioteca Antoniana MS 97 reveal: Boethius' *opuscula sacra* are bound together with spiritual writings by Hugh of St Victor, John Chrysostom, and Bernard of Clairvaux. See M. Passalacqua and L. Smith (eds), *Codices Boethiani: A Conspectus of Manuscripts of the Works of Boethius*, iii: *Italy and the Vatican City* (London, 2001), p. 268.

³⁹ Cited in E. Filthaut, *Roland von Cremona und die Anfänge der Scholastik im Predigerorden* (Vechta, 1936), p. 55: 'magne auctoritatis in philosophia et theologia'; and L. Alfonsi, 'Boezio in Rolando da Cremona', *Rivista di filosofia neo-scholastica*, 37 (1945), pp. 275–7: 'de demonibus dicitur quod subito possint et valde cito instruere hominem in aliqua scientia et quod possent [*sic*] in brevissimo tempore docere logicam vel astronomiam. Unde dicitur quod aliqui se dederunt demonibus ad obediendum eis ut docerent eos et cito facti sunt sapientes. Unde quidam dicebant hoc esse verum de Boetio quia cito didicit philosophiam'.

⁴⁰ *Super Boecio* I.p3, p. 69: 'ea que Boecius fecit per philosophicam sapienciam dicebant ipsum facere per magicam artem'. The tradition may also be alluded to in an *Accessus Boetii* used in the twelfth century: 'falso nigromanticus appellatus'. See *Accessus ad auctores*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, in *Accessus ad auctores; Bernard d'Utrecht; Conrad d'Hirsau, Dialogus super auctores* (Leiden, 1970), p. 47.

in a different way. The nature of Boethius' vision raised questions for his readers about how people gain insight into time and how they might be consoled by that insight. Did a philosopher's intellectual vision about God's providence lead to the same insight as the vision of a prophet like David? Was the prudent man a prophet? Was the vision of a contemplative the same as a prophet's? These scholastic questions about different types of vision were prominent in the thirteenth century, and the conflict over inspiration framed by Aquinas and Olivi did not disappear, but rather intensified as the fourteenth century progressed. One anonymous fourteenth-century translator of the *Consolation*, for instance, made explicit the uncertain relationship between natural and supernatural insight—this Italian version replaced *Philosophia* and put Boethius in dialogue with *Proffeta* throughout the text, for instance in the Latin heading to Book I, prose 1: 'Hic ostendit Proffeta quomodo venit ad consollandom [*sic*] ipsum in habitu pulcre mulieris'.⁴¹ This text blurs intellectual and inspired knowledge of the workings of providence. Within this context, Trevet sought to articulate the nature of Boethius' insight and to contribute to the debate over inspiration in the present day.

II. POETIC INSIGHT

Assessing the exact nature of Boethius' guide and her powers often took place through comments on the opening scene of Book I, prose 1, where Boethius explores the status of poetic inspiration. Lady Philosophy enters and dismisses the poetic Muses hanging around Boethius' bed, berating them as *scenicae meretriculae* ('stage whores').⁴² This particular scene would prove to be an important *locus classicus* for humanists in their attempts to show the validity of poetry's philosophic powers. Letizia Panizza claims that the Paduan humanist Albertino Mussato (1261–1329), a contemporary of Trevet's, was the first to recognize that Boethius does not oppose all poetry to philosophy.⁴³ In fact, Trevet seems to have been the first to recognize this, by establishing the idea that Philosophy's criticism of the Muses in this section does not imply a rejection of all poetry, but only of a particular, degraded type.⁴⁴

⁴¹ ed. E. G. Parodi, 'Studj Liguri', *Archivio glottologico italiano*, 14 (1898), p. 52: 'Here he shows how *Proffeta* came to console him in the dress of a beautiful woman'.

⁴² *De consolatione* I.p1.8, p. 2; trans., J. Relihan (Indianapolis, IN, 2001), p. 3.

⁴³ L. Panizza, 'Italian Humanists and Boethius: Was Philosophy for or against Poetry?' in J. Henry and S. Hutton (eds), *New Perspectives on Renaissance Thought* (London, 1990), pp. 48–67, esp. p. 56.

⁴⁴ Nauta also rejects Panizza's claims, but he says William of Conches was first: 'Some Aspects', p. 770 n. 6. In what follows, I show why Trevet's recognition deserves more credit.

Since Boethius does not explicitly identify the Muses (*camenae*) who open the *Consolation* by urging him to sing woeful songs, medieval commentators had a good deal of interpretative freedom when they explained Philosophy's rejection of them.⁴⁵ For Remigius, these Muses were to be identified with music—the *camenae* are called Muses as if *canenae* from "singing" (*a canendo*).⁴⁶ Others saw them as signs of the excessive sensuality caused by the corruptions of love poetry.⁴⁷ Philosophy's dismissal was also read as a rejection of secular (that is, pagan) knowledge, falsehood, and dangerous delight. In the twelfth century, the commentator known as the Anonymous of the Reginenses called the Muses 'seculares scientie' and the Anonymous Erfurtensis said that Philosophy condemns the Muses invoked by those who write *saeculariter*, that is, 'like Horace, Virgil, and others who invent the nine Muses, the nine goddesses'.⁴⁸ Secular literature leads to secular desires (*carmina saecularia vel desideria*).⁴⁹ All these interpretations place Boethius' guide, Lady Philosophy, in opposition to the secular, associating her with truthful sacred knowledge.

Later commentators paid greater attention both to the limitations of Boethius' condemnation of those Muses and to Philosophy's declaration that she has her own Muses (*meae Musae*).⁵⁰ Philosophy's Muses had not always been noticed by commentators, even though Boethius alludes to her use of both Rhetoric and Music.⁵¹ Neither Remigius nor his twelfth-century follower, the Anonymous Erfurtensis, mention this. William of Conches was the first to do so:

They are called *Camenae* as though they are certain pleasant (*amoenae*) sciences singing. But there are some that are whole and some that are

⁴⁵ *De consolacione* I.m1.3; I.p1.

⁴⁶ *Commentary on the De Consolacione Philosophiae*, ed. E. T. Silk, in *Saeculi noni auctoris in Boetii Consolationem Philosophiae commentarius* (Rome, 1935), Appendix, p. 312: '*Camenae* dicuntur Musae quasi canenae a canendo'.

⁴⁷ An anonymous tenth-century gloss stated: 'Through these harlots (*meretriculae*) Boethius wants to signify the songs of the poets (*carmina poetarum*) which consist of love and lascivious things (*lasciviosa*) and which dissolve the minds of the young in the manner of the sick': cited by K. Heitmann, 'Boethius' Verdammung der Musen im Mittelalter', in K. Heitmann and E. Schroeder (eds), *Renatae Litterae* (Frankfurt, 1973), p. 36. Such an attitude was not far from Boethius' description of the dangers of sensual (*lascivum*) music, which corrupts people, especially at the theatres: *De institutione musica*, ed. G. Friedlein (Leipzig, 1867) I.1, p. 181.

⁴⁸ Anonymous of the Reginenses, cited in G. Drake, 'The Muses in the *Consolation*: The Late Medieval Mythographic Tradition', in N. H. Kaylor and P. E. Phillips (eds), *New Directions in Boethian Studies* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1997), p. 173; Anonymous Erfurtensis, *Saeculi noni auctoris in Boetii Consolationem Philosophiae commentarius*, ed. E. T. Silk (Rome, 1935), pp. 7–8: 'ut Horatius Virgilius et alii qui novem Musas novem deas fingunt'.

⁴⁹ *Saeculi noni*, p. 16.

⁵⁰ *De consolacione* I.p1.11.

⁵¹ *De consolacione* II.p1.8.

mutilated. The whole ones are of philosophic import because in their constancy and integrity of reason they preserve man. The mutilated ones are poetic, that is, the science of creating and describing metrically, because they tear the hearts of men and render inconstancy by leading pleasure or grief to memory, not by instructing or consoling.⁵²

William does not identify all Muses with pagan falsehood; instead, he points out that some retain a wholeness and do not lead people astray. Poetry, however, is among those that destroy because of its alluring powers: its muses are called whores because of this seductive element—‘they entice man by delighting’.⁵³ Leading people with their pleasing metre to wallow and delight in their grief, poets obscure true reason (*ratio*) with their sweet poisons (*dulces veneni*).⁵⁴ Boethius was deluded in thinking the poetic Muses were a consolation. Philosophy, not poetry, encourages constancy, according to William, and it does so with her own Muses, one of which William identifies as *eloquentia*.⁵⁵ Philosophy pours over Boethius the light medicinal sweetness of rhetoric.

In Trevet’s work, there is a somewhat different emphasis. He agrees with William that the *Camenae* are singers (*canentes*) and represent the arts or knowledge (*artes vel scientiae*) which delight the mind (*animus*).⁵⁶ Like William, he distinguishes between those arts and sciences which are complete or unimpaired (*integre*) and those that are mutilated (*lacere*), and for the same reasons as William. Yet, Trevet grants even to the potentially lacerating poetic Muses some particular good: ‘*them at least*: here he teaches that he has some solace in these mutilated Muses, to which his attention had been turned’.⁵⁷ Trevet reveals his recognition both of the greater complexities of Boethius’ text itself and of the delights of music, an

⁵² *Super Boetium* I.m1, pp. 10–11: ‘Camenae dicuntur quasi canentes amoenae quaelibet scientiae. Sed sunt aliae integrae aliae lacerae. Integrae sunt philosophicae sententiae, quia in integritate rationis et constantia conservant hominem. Lacerae dicuntur poeticae sententiae, id est scientiae fingendi et describendi metricae, quia lacerant corda hominum et inconstantiam reddunt reducendo ad memoriam vel voluptatem vel dolorem, non instruendo vel consolando’.

⁵³ *Super Boetium* I.p1, p. 37: ‘alliciunt hominem delectando’.

⁵⁴ *Super Boetium* I.p1, pp. 12, 38, 42. Vincent of Beauvais opens his precis of the *Consolation* by noting poetry’s ‘sweet poisons’ (*dulces veneni*): *Speculum maius*, iv, XXI.15, col. 823.

⁵⁵ *Super Boetium* I.p1, p. 29; I.p6, pp. 95–6.

⁵⁶ *Super Boecio* I.m1, p. 16.

⁵⁷ *Super Boecio* I.m1, pp. 16–17: ‘*has saltem* hic docet se in istis Camenis laceris, ad quas studium suum permutatum erat, aliquale habere solacium’. The phrase *has saltem* is from *De consolatione* I.m1.5: ‘*Has saltem* nullus potuit pervincere terror’. Cf. the Anonymous Erfurtensis, who ignores this line’s meaning and identifies as faithful not the Muses but Philosophy: *Saeculi Noni*, p. 9.

appreciation we have already seen in his Psalm commentary.⁵⁸ He notes that the poetic Muses actually do offer a form of consolation:

he receives a double consolation: in one way in so far as he possesses it securely, in another way in the use of the thing, as is clear from a lyrist having a lyre.⁵⁹

In fact, poetic knowledge (*poetica sciencia*) goes beyond the merely temporal and thus has a certain lasting power—the very reason why Boethius can still turn to it when he has lost everything else: '[Boethius] had solace because he possessed [poetic knowledge], since, because it is not a bodily good, it could not be taken away by temporal persecution'.⁶⁰ In contrast to William of Conches's claim that Boethius was deluded when he trusted in poetry, Trevet acknowledges a particular consoling power for poetry, uniquely in the Boethian commentary tradition up to that point. Poetry's power is not subservient to fortune's sway over temporal things.⁶¹ This is not to say that poetry for Trevet is wholly good. It must be united with reason to be both consoling and good for its own sake.⁶²

Trevet, therefore, unlike William of Conches, rejects the notion that poetry is pure falsehood or empty pleasure. As a result, Trevet shows that when Philosophy speaks of her Muses, she has poetry in mind. Philosophy uses rhetoric (*colores rhetorici*) with Boethius, but she notes that rhetoric must be tied to music in order to remain united to reason; music provides its *ratio*.⁶³ A concept of philosophical poetry can thus be inferred. The

⁵⁸ Ch. 2, pp. 70–1.

⁵⁹ *Super Boecio* I.m1, p. 17: 'dupliciter consolacionem recipit: uno modo in quantum illam secure possidet, alio modo in usu illius rei, sicut patet de cytharedo habente bonam cytharam'. The terminology of 'use' and 'possession' was a familiar one from debates recently begun over *usus pauper*, that is, whether the mendicant orders could use Church property without actually owning it. Trevet made his own contribution to this debate in a lost treatise known as *Scutum veritatis* (c.1322): R. J. Dean, 'The Life and Works of Nicholas Trevet, with Special Reference to his Anglo-Norman Chronicle' (University of Oxford, DPhil thesis, 1938), p. 134. This work can be partially reconstructed due to attacks on it by Walter of Chatton's *Tractatus de paupertate evangelica*, ed. D. Douie, 'Three Treatises on Evangelical Poverty', *AFH*, 24–5 (1931–32), pp. 341–69, and 36–58, 210–40. In the treatise, Trevet argues against Spiritual Franciscan claims that one could use without possession, promoting instead the goodness and naturalness of basic possessions. Whether there is a greater link on this point between the Boethius commentary and the anti-Franciscan treatise is difficult to establish without Trevet's original work.

⁶⁰ *Super Boecio* I.m1, p. 17: 'solacium ei erat quod eam secure possidebat, quia, cum non esset bonum corporale, non potuit persecucione temporalis auferri'.

⁶¹ Others would soon follow Trevet's lead, such as Tholomaeus de Asinariis in 1307. William Wheteley did not, however; he said that only the truth-telling of philosophy, and not the lies of poetry, could bring consolation: Drake, 'Muses', pp. 174, 199 n. 24.

⁶² *Super Boecio* III.p2, p. 312. Trevet condemns Boethius' poetic harlots not for false teachings or seduction but rather because they make people wallow in their own misery: *Super Boecio* I.p1, p. 36.

⁶³ *Super Boecio* I.p1, p. 30.

sweetness of the metres of the *Consolation* are like sugar (*dulcedo zucare*) to help the bitter medicine of rational consolations (*rationes consolantes*) go down, and this sweetness comes from the music of poetry rather than prose.⁶⁴ Philosophy's servant Music has a harmony (*concordia*) which binds eloquence to wisdom; Music achieves this through poetry.⁶⁵ Trevet's willingness to bind poetry to music so explicitly, and thus to grant poetry a healing power that is reasonable and even conducive to wisdom, is significant. His Psalm commentary does the same thing, endowing the words of sacred prophecy with healing power, not through the truth of their words but through their poetic, harmonious arrangement. Music, harmony, and delight are a crucial part of any truthful rhetorical persuasion.

Music had certainly been welcomed more warmly than poetry by medieval thinkers: its mathematical components and its ability to make known the *ratio* of natural causes through harmony won it a place in the university quadrivium.⁶⁶ Despite some ambivalent views of music's physical effects,⁶⁷ by the fourteenth century a growing appreciation of the sensible, physical quality of music entwined more firmly Boethius' three types of music—*mundana*, *humana*, *instrumentalis*—which had often been considered distinct.⁶⁸ Thus, an anonymous thirteenth-century Parisian 'Introduction to Philosophy' insists that 'music and astronomy are not properly mathematical principles, but as if middle principles between natural and mathematical'.⁶⁹ A similar approach can be seen in the

⁶⁴ *Super Boecio*, prol., p. 12: 'Musica . . . , cuius proprietas in metro et non in prosa observatur, est maxime motiva affectus'. Trevet draws also from Boethius' *De musica* I.1. Boethius himself called Fortune's arguments honey-sweet with rhetoric and music ('rhetoricae ac Musicae melle dulcedinis'), though his character still needed more convincing: *De consolatione* II.p3.2.

⁶⁵ *Super Boecio* II.p1, II.p4, pp. 182–3, 222–3. Several manuscripts illuminated after Trevet's time take his idea of Philosophy's Muses into account, as Courcelle's survey reveals (*Consolation*, pp. 90ff), e.g. an early fifteenth-century French one which labels the Muses as 'Musique', 'Rhetorique', and 'Poétique'.

⁶⁶ An anonymous Parisian master's *Accessus philosophorum* (c.1230/40) on music highlights, insofar as it is *theorica*, how music informs the intellect in its 'understanding of causes and rational principles (*causae et rationes*), which comprise its harmonies (*armonie*)', and, insofar as it is *practica*, how it is useful in calming the angry, if used prudently (*prudenter*): *Accessus philosophorum VII artium liberalium*, ed. C. Laffleur, in *Quatre introductions à la philosophie au XIIIe siècle* (Montreal, 1988), pp. 204–5.

⁶⁷ Cf. Ch. 2, p. 56.

⁶⁸ *Mundana* unites the cosmos and its elements, *humana* unites body and soul, and *instrumentalis* is artificially produced by instruments: *De musica* I.2, pp. 187–9.

⁶⁹ Cited in C. Meyer, 'Lectures et lecteurs du *De institutione musica* de Boèce au XIIIe siècle', in Galonnier (ed.), *Boèce*, p. 668: 'musica et astronomia non sunt proprie et principales mathematicae, sed quasi medie inter naturales et mathematicas'. Aquinas follows this classification, placing music between arithmetic and physics: *In Boetii De trinitate*, in *Opusc. theo.*, ii, 3.5.3. This trend, Meyer claims ('Lectures et lecteurs', pp. 665, 668),

discussion of music's power by the thirteenth-century anonymous reviser and expander of William of Conches's commentary known as Pseudo-William. Pseudo-William discusses the example of David playing before Saul (3 Kgs 16:23), and, rather than repeating traditional claims that David's music expelled a demon or imposed microcosmic order, he says that it healed by removing Saul's grief.⁷⁰ Trevet's appreciation of both the theoretical and practical effects of poetic music are part of these larger developments.

Trevet also argues that poetry is not just musical but philosophical, which is evident from the presence of obscure language in the *Consolation*. William of Conches had insisted on the legitimate use of *integumenta* in philosophy: 'all demonstration . . . happens either through fable or history or integument'.⁷¹ Trevet is no less a supporter of the idea, especially when reading some of Boethius' more troubling passages, like the descent of souls to earth: Boethius speaks 'in the Platonic manner' (*more Platonico*), so one should not think he means what he appears to say.⁷² Drawing on Aquinas's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Trevet makes explicit poetry's connections to philosophy: ancient theologians, he notes, were accustomed to use these integuments ('iuxta morem antiquiorum theologorum'), a practice akin to poetic composition.⁷³ He continues, 'the custom of the poets is to use fables and integuments and frequently improper locutions'.⁷⁴ Thus when Boethius wrote poetry, he was following the custom of an ancient *poeta-theologus*, using Platonic words in

ultimately led to the mid-thirteenth-century removal of Boethius' *De musica* from the Paris Arts Faculty quadrivium curriculum, since that book focuses more on numerical than on physical qualities of music. Christopher Page documents musical theorists, including Johannes de Grocheio (*De musica*, 1300) and Jacques de Liège (*Speculum musicae*, c.1325), who resist Boethian music theory and prioritize the *experience* of music: *Discarding Images: Reflections on Music and Culture in Medieval France* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 16–17.

⁷⁰ *Commentarius in Boetii Consolationem philosophiae*, London, British Library, MS Royal 15.B.III, II.p3, fol. 41r: 'Ita david solebat cantare ante saul ut illius dolorem removeret'. The commentary survives in eight manuscripts: Nauta, introduction in *Super Boetium*, p. lxxxiii. For a survey of medieval interpretations of this scene, see M. van Schaik, *The Harp in the Middle Ages* (Atlanta, GA, 1992), pp. 40–2. Cf. Ch. 2, p. 72 n. 108.

⁷¹ *Super Boetium* III.m12, pp. 198–9: 'omnis demonstratio . . . fit vel per fabulam vel per historiam vel per integumentum'.

⁷² *Super Boecio* III.m6, pp. 355–6; trans., *MLTC*, p. 340.

⁷³ *Super Boecio* III.m11, p. 472. The idea is also in Macrobius, whom Trevet cites: *Super Boecio* IV.1, p. 518. Macrobius insists on the distinction between poetic fables (for entertainment) and philosophic integuments (for instruction and protection from the uninitiated): *Commentarius in Somnium Scipionis*, ed. J. Willis (Leipzig, 1970) I.2.9. Trevet, however, sees these combined in Boethius: delight and instruction are compatible. William accepted the same combination: P. Dronke, *Fabula: Explorations into the Uses of Myth in Medieval Platonism* (Leiden, 1974), pp. 15–17.

⁷⁴ *Super Boecio* III.m11, p. 472: 'Mos autem poetarum est uti fabulis et integumentis et frequenter locutionibus impropiis'.

metre.⁷⁵ After Trevet's discussion of Platonic language, he refers again to different types of Muses, noting, 'a muse is sometimes called song, and this pertains to poets, and sometimes called wisdom, and this pertains to philosophers'.⁷⁶ Trevet still insists on a certain division of Muses here, but if music is part of poetry, and at the same time a servant of philosophy, the categories clearly overlap when philosophy—or prophecy, in the case of the Psalms—adapts itself to poetry.

Nonetheless, when given a chance to endorse explicitly the relationship between all the categories in play—poetry, music, philosophy, theology and prophecy—Trevet shies away. The moment comes in his explication of the myth of Orpheus, when he encounters the word '*vates*' describing this ancient Thracian bard.⁷⁷ Trevet tells us that Orpheus was called a *vates* because he composed songs (*carmina*); he then proceeds to give the etymology:

He is called *vates* either from *vis mentis* or from *videndo* or from *vicio* *vies*, which is to bind. Priests were called *vates* from *vis mentis*, because prophecies—from *videndo*—were happening by divine frenzy (*furor*); poets from *viendo*, that is, to bind, because they were binding their songs with metres and feet.⁷⁸

Unlike Peter Lombard, Trevet does not apply *vis mentis* to all three types of *vates*, priests, prophets, and poets, and he furthermore combines priest and prophet (but not poet) via the same function of oracular frenzy.⁷⁹ Although Trevet would have known Aquinas's distinction between poetic and prophetic language, what best explains Trevet's approach in this passage is his role as historian and philologist, since he is glossing a classical allusion to Orpheus. Trevet clearly refers only to *pagan* priests as *vates*, because he attributes to them divine madness, which for him is *vis mentis*.⁸⁰ Augustine's influence is evident: Trevet notes in his commentary

⁷⁵ *Super Boecio* III.m11, pp. 472–3: 'precipue in metris ubi servat morem poeticum Platonis verbis utitur.'

⁷⁶ *Super Boecio* III.m11, p. 476: 'musa aliquando dicitur cantilena et sic spectat ad poetas, quandoque sapiencia et sic spectat ad philosophos'.

⁷⁷ *De consolatione* III.m12.6. Trevet considered Orpheus one of the early *poetae theologici*: *In libros Augustini de civitate dei*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 292, XVIII.14, fol. 144r.

⁷⁸ *Super Boecio* III.m12, p. 505: 'Dicitur autem vates vel a vi mentis vel a videndo vel a vicio vies quod est ligare. Sacerdotes dicebantur vates a vi mentis, quia divino furore agebantur prophetie a videndo; poete a viendo id est ligando quia carmina sua metris et pedibus ligabant'.

⁷⁹ The most immediate source for Trevet's etymology seems to be William Brito: *Summa Britonis*, ed. L. W. Daly and B. A. Daly, ii (Padua, 1975), p. 817.

⁸⁰ Isidore had attributed *vis mentis* to poets only, while Peter Lombard used *vis mentis* for poets, priests, and prophets, but without connotations of madness. See Ch. 2, pp. 78–80.

on *City of God* that it was the pagan priests who were the problem in Roman religion, engaging in all sorts of frenzied immoral behaviour.⁸¹ Interestingly, Trevet has actually shifted to priests the attribution of madness which Isidore and Uguccione (but not Peter Lombard) had given to poets. Poets, for Trevet, are called *vates* simply because they create rhythmic music. Though he does not grant them any special inspiration, he nonetheless preserves them from the stigma of frenzy.

This particular discussion highlights Trevet's understanding of inspiration in the pagan past. But his *Consolation* commentary also reveals what he thought of inspiration in the Christian present. Trevet's conception of contemporary inspiration emerges most clearly when he supplements his reflections on poetry and philosophy with a consideration of prophecy.

III. PROPHETIC VISION

When Trevet glosses the *Consolation*, what he does *not* say is often as important as what he does. This is particularly true when he deals with Boethius' reflections on providence and fate in *Consolation* IV prose 6. Medieval commentators understood Boethius to be speaking of fate as the temporal unfolding of God's providential will, but they also recognized he did not equate fate and providence absolutely.⁸² Boethius says that something can escape temporal fate by drawing closer to God's mind, as if to the centre of a spinning wheel:

a thing is free from Fate to the extent that it seeks to gain ever more closely that centre of things. And should it cling to the stability of the mind that is above it, then, free from motion, it transcends the necessity of Fate as well.⁸³

In other words, it becomes possible to escape time, even in this life, through contemplation of the divine mind.

Boethius draws this notion from the Platonic and Stoic tradition: the temporal ceases to have a grip on the free soul, no matter what events it has to endure. By philosophically contemplating the divine mind, souls become free from ignorance, united to divine stability. This freedom depends on virtue. Virtuous souls are not free to perform any action

⁸¹ Commentary on *De civ.*, MS Bodl. 292, fol. 138r.

⁸² William of Conches calls fate the 'temporalis dispositio rerum' (*Super Boetium* IV.p6, p. 251); Ps-William says that fate's 'ordo rerum' proceeds from *providentia* (*In Consolationem*, MS Royal 15.B.III, fol. 110v).

⁸³ *De consolatione* IV.p6.15-6: 'tanto aliquid fato liberum est quanto illum rerum cardinem vicinius petit; quodsi supernae mentis haeserit firmitati, motu carens fati quoque supergreditur necessitatem'; trans., p. 115.

they want, but they are free in their desires, free to choose whether to pursue the good or the bad.⁸⁴ When the fourth-century philosopher Calcidius translated Plato's *Timaeus* into Latin and commented upon it, he passed on a similar notion to Western Christendom: fate may control what happens, but humans still have freedom over their desires.⁸⁵

Before Trevet's time, medieval commentators on this section of the *Consolation* generally held it to mean that it was possible for certain individuals to escape the limits of time and see with more than mortal sight. They used Boethius' observations as proof that prophets could have visions across the span of time, including into the future. The *Consolation* glosses attributed to Remigius affirmed this through the example of St Benedict.⁸⁶

Sometimes saints placed in this fragile flesh transcend the order of fate (*series fati*) for a time. For blessed Benedict our father, when he saw the whole world at once (*simul totum*), was elevated by the divine spirit beyond the nature of all things. Therefore he transcended the order of fate then, but soon, because he was covered with mortal flesh, he understood that he was held within the enclosure of the body and that, being mortal, he was similar to all other men. Thus, through his holiness, because he was near to God, he passed beyond fate; but because of his mortal flesh he fell back again to it.⁸⁷

The source of Remigius' story is Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* (Book II), which tells the life of St Benedict, an exact contemporary of Boethius.⁸⁸ Gregory describes the fleeting, transcendent vision that Benedict had near the end of his life, a vision Gregory places within the context of prophecy. Benedict performs twelve prophetic marvels, both predictions and long-distance insights, the greatest of which is this cosmic vision.⁸⁹ Gregory

⁸⁴ R. Sharples, 'Fate, Prescience and Free Will', in Marenbon (ed.), *Companion to Boethius*, p. 214.

⁸⁵ Calcidius, *Timaeus*, ed. J. H. Waszink (London, 1975), 151, p. 187: 'the choice (*optio*) is in our power'. Cf. Ps-William: Boethius sought freedom from passions since only then could one know the *summum bonum*: *In Consolationem* I.m7, MS Royal 15.B.III, fol. 33v.

⁸⁶ The passage appears in numerous Remigian manuscripts, including at least fifteen before 1100: Love, 'Latin Commentaries', p. 130 n. 177.

⁸⁷ 'A Commentary by Remigius Autissiodorensis on the *De consolatione Philosophiae* of Boethius', ed. H. F. Stewart, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 17 (1916), p. 37: 'Nam sancti aliquando in hac fragili carne positi *fati seriem* transcendunt ad tempus. Beatissimus enim Benedictus noster pater quando simul totum mundum conspexit, divino spiritu ultra omnem rerum naturam sublevatus est. Tunc ergo et *fati seriem* transcendit, sed mox, quia mortali [carne] erat circumdatus, cognovit se intra corporis saepa deteneri et mortalem esse aliis hominibus similem. Per sanctitatem igitur, quia deo erat proximus fatum excessit; sed rursus per carnem quae erat mortalis ad ipsum relapsus est'.

⁸⁸ Courcelle has explored Boethius' and Gregory's common sources, including Macrobius, in *Consolation*, Appendix II.

⁸⁹ Adalbert de Vogüé's commentary on the translation of Gregory's *Dialogi* Book II, *The Life of St Benedict*, trans. H. Costello and E. de Bhaldrath (Petersham, MA, 1993),

links Benedict's powers to his sanctity: 'he penetrated to the very secrets of divinity, ... who observed the commandments of the divinity'.⁹⁰ The Holy Spirit reveals the mind of God (*sensus Domini*) to saints insofar as they are one with God; but, insofar as they are 'weighed down by corruptible flesh, they are not with God' and are thus ignorant of God's judgements.⁹¹ For Gregory, the prophetic charism is not habitual but temporary for this reason—because virtue is not permanent—and also because one may need to be humbled by the removal of the gift: 'the spirit of prophecy does not always enlighten the minds of prophets continuously'.⁹² But, in a final prophetic display, Benedict nonetheless obtains a vision of Creation in the light of God. Standing by a window in prayer and contemplation (*speculatio*), the saint suddenly saw a light spreading across the sky, and then 'the whole world was brought before his eyes, gathered up, as it were, under a single ray of sun'.⁹³ As Gregory explains it, the mind expands (*animus dilatus*) through the inner light of vision and comes to stand above the world (*superior mundo*) and even itself; snatched up into the divine light, it looks down and sees how narrow and small the world is—'angusta est omnis creatura'.⁹⁴ The mind in rapture (*raptus*) takes on the divine perspective. Holiness is the path to this God's-eye, prophetic view from a watch-tower (*specula*).⁹⁵

Remigius' allusion to Gregory's scene in his *Consolation* glosses makes explicit connections between Benedict's vision and Boethius' description of eternity. Boethius defines eternity as 'a possession of life ... simultaneously

has guided my interpretation. He notes that Gregory began his *Homilies on Ezekiel* right after completing this work, and there are strong connections between the prophetic miracles listed in Homily I.1 and those Benedict performed. Benedict is thus placed in 'the lineage ... of all the prophets': *St Benedict*, p. 80.

⁹⁰ *Dialogi*, ed. A. de Vogüé, *Dialogues*, SC 260 (Paris, 1979) XVI.3–4, p. 186; trans., p. 88: 'secreta penetravit, ... qui divinitatis praecepta servavit'.

⁹¹ *Dialogi* XVI.5, 7, pp. 188, 190; trans., p. 88: 'carnis corruptibilis pondere gravati, cum Deo non sunt'. Gregory thought it a very rare possibility to have a cosmic vision: cf. *Moralia* XVIII.54, where Moses and Paul are listed as exceptions. Medieval accounts of such visions are also rare: B. McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the Twelfth Century* (New York, 1994), p. 73.

⁹² *Dialogi* XXI.3, p. 200; trans., p. 100: 'Prophetiae spiritus ... prophetarum mentes non semper inradiat'.

⁹³ *Dialogi* XXXV.3, p. 238; trans., p. 165: 'omnis ... mundus, velut sub uno solis radio collectus, ante oculos eius adductus est'.

⁹⁴ *Dialogi* XXXV.6–7, p. 240. Cf. the young Benedict's rejection of the world ('despexit mundum') and Rome as worthless: *Dialogi*, prol.1, p. 126.

⁹⁵ For Boethius, God looks out 'ex alta providentiae specula' (*De consolatione* IV.p6.30) and Gregory places Benedict by a window in a tower 'in speculatione'. Courcelle explores the source of this term for medieval mystical and prophetic vision in *Consolation*, pp. 355ff. Cf. also the fourteenth-century image of providence in a tower in *Consolation*, pp. 236–7.

entire (*tota simul*) and perfect, which has no end'.⁹⁶ Remigius' use of 'simul totum' in the passage quoted above clearly evokes this definition. Remigius has even adjusted Gregory's story to fit better the Boethian context: in Gregory's version, Benedict stands, in a sense, above all space, but for Remigius, the story is proof that someone can stand above *time*.

Gregory himself recognized the correspondence between visions of space and time in his *Moralia in Job*. Job, in precisely the same terms as Benedict, sees how narrow all Creation is (*angusta est omnis creatura*), and then has a vision embracing past, present, and future all at once. For Gregory, Job saw because he was full of the Holy Spirit. Job sought the peace of eternity obtained through contemplation (*contemplatio*) when one stands above time, where nothing comes and nothing passes.⁹⁷ This vision, which views the world and its history from the Boethian perspective of the eternal, is prophecy. Job saw by means of the spirit of prophecy (*spiritus prophetiae*) those things which God sees all at once (*simul*). In this way, Job knew of the Incarnation.⁹⁸

Thus, Gregory emphasizes prophecy as a perspective free from the flux of time, standing above it. In Gregory's model, this perspective is not just freedom from ignorance, as in the Stoic tradition; it is knowledge of the sweep of history. The correspondences with Benedict's vision make it clear that Gregory had Job's perspective in mind for Benedict as well: a universal vision of time was possible even now, in the current age. This concept was already familiar to historians contemplating their grand subject matter: Orosius in the fifth century said his authorial intent in the early pages of the *Historiae adversus paganos* was to describe 'the conflicts of the human race . . . , viewing them as from a watchtower' (*specula*).⁹⁹ Eight centuries later, Vincent of Beauvais prefaced his encyclopaedic *Speculum maius* with a description of his own mental view from a *specula*, looking down and comprehending in one stroke ('*uno ictu*') a vision of not only the creatures of the earth but also the mutable temporal succession of all history.¹⁰⁰ Benedict's vision was the spiritual or

⁹⁶ *De consolatione* V.p6.4, p. 101: 'aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio'; trans., p. 144.

⁹⁷ *Moralia* IV.32.65, p. 208, V.32.57, p. 259. Gregory uses *speculatio* and *contemplatio* as synonyms. For the equation of these terms in scriptural and monastic contexts, see J. Leclercq, *Études sur le vocabulaire monastique du moyen âge*, Studia Anselmiana, 48 (Rome, 1961), pp. 82–5.

⁹⁸ *Moralia* XI.19.30, p. 604. Cf. Olivi's description of Job as contemplative: Ch. 4, p. 148 n. 220.

⁹⁹ ed. M.-P. Arnaud Lindet, i (Paris, 1990) I.14–15; trans. R. J. Deferrari (Washington, DC, 1964), p. 7: 'conflictationes generis humani . . . e specula ostentaturus'.

¹⁰⁰ *Apologia auctoris*, ed. A.-D. von den Brincken, 'Geschichtsbetrachtung bei Vincenz von Beauvais: Die *Apologia Auctoris* zum *Speculum Maius*', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung*

supernatural analogue to Orosius' and Vincent's natural ones. Remigius therefore brought Benedict and Boethius together because their visions were so clearly related: the saint and the philosopher were both contemplatives who attained the perspective of prophecy in the current age.

When we turn, however, to Trevet's gloss on this section of the *Consolation*, we find a strikingly different emphasis. Trevet, like most of his predecessors, does raise the issue of whether it is possible in this life to escape the temporal order (*fatum*), but he rejects the possibility of a prophetic perspective on time. I will discuss this rejection in greater detail shortly, but what is important to note now is that Trevet does not turn to the story of Benedict's vision to answer this question. At first glance, this might not seem so unusual an omission, considering Trevet had no special monastic allegiances. But there are two reasons in particular why it is surprising. First of all, he would almost certainly have seen the story in his sources. As Lodi Nauta has shown, Trevet used not only William of Conches but a series of Remigian glosses related to those found in a manuscript of the *Consolation of Philosophy* in Paris's Bibliothèque nationale.¹⁰¹ These glosses, like so many others in the Remigian tradition, contain the story of Benedict's vision.¹⁰² William of Conches, it is true, makes no reference to Benedict, but William does not ask whether someone could escape time: he speaks only in general terms, saying that the closer something is to the divine centre, the less mutable it is.¹⁰³ William's omission was noticed by his readers, especially by those who wanted to answer the question about time. Pseudo-William, for instance, *was* interested in that question about time, and in order to answer it he considered it necessary to reintroduce what William had omitted, namely a comparison with 'beatus benedictus', showing that an embodied soul could transcend fate (*series fatalis*), at least 'for a little while'.¹⁰⁴ Trevet, too, is interested in the question about time. We can be fairly certain he knew how it was usually answered.

The second reason one might have expected Trevet to introduce Benedict at this stage was that Benedict's visionary experience was also a major touchstone for scholastic discussions of prophetic and contemplative vision in universities. Gregory's story had proved to be vastly influential, perhaps because Benedict was a post-Incarnation visionary who

des Mittelalters, 34 (1978), ch. 6, p. 473: 'tempora omnia per diversas generationum successiones rerum mutationes continentia'.

¹⁰¹ Appendix II, in Minnis (ed.), *Chaucer's Boece*, pp. 192–6.

¹⁰² MS lat. 14380, fol. 49r. ¹⁰³ *Super Boetium* IV.p6, p. 259.

¹⁰⁴ *In Consolationem* IV.p6, MS Royal 15.B.III, fol. 111v: 'sic sed non totaliter. sed ad tempus'. The Anonymous Erfurtensis also follows Remigius and explains Benedict's vision by saying that saints are not subject to fate insofar as they are holy: *Saeculi Nomi*, pp. 252–3: 'sancti viri nihil debent fato in quantum sunt sancti'.

seemed to have attained what only Moses and Paul had before him. In the twelfth century, Benedict was the definitive example of someone who could escape the normal strictures of the world. Bernard of Clairvaux used Benedict to explain contemplative rapture: quoting Gregory, he declared that, while most people must rise from sense data to knowledge of God, Benedict seemed to have been blessed with a special understanding of the Creator usually reserved for the angels.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, Rupert of Deutz pointed to Benedict's vision as a special instance of the power of God's grace to enrapture a soul.¹⁰⁶

Benedict also took his place among the *quaestiones* of thirteenth-century scholastic theologians, who were particularly concerned to determine whether he had glimpsed the divine essence. Thomas Aquinas devoted one of his *quodlibetals* in 1269 to the question, 'Whether the blessed Benedict saw the divine essence in the vision in which he saw the whole world'.¹⁰⁷ Aquinas answers that Benedict did *not* because he was not entirely dead to this life nor enraptured beyond his senses as Paul had been. Unlike Bernard of Clairvaux, Aquinas wanted to avoid positing non-scriptural exceptions. He wanted to avoid, in other words, the notion that his contemporaries could get a God's-eye view of anything. Visionaries did not have a special experience that altered their insight.¹⁰⁸ Other thirteenth-century scholastic thinkers who considered Benedict's vision—with varied responses—included Albert the Great, the Franciscans Bonaventure and Matthew of Aquasparta, and the secular theologian Henry of Ghent.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ *Sermones de diversis*, 9.1, SBO 6/1 p. 118: 'rapta fuisse videtur anima illa beata, quae collectum sub uno solis radio mundum universum conspexit'. Bernard accepted that rapture could momentarily free someone from the body: *Sermones super Cantica canticorum*, 52.3–6, SBO 2.

¹⁰⁶ *De gloria et honore Filii hominis super Matthaeum*, ed. R. Haacke, CCCM 29 (Turnhout, 1979), ch. 4. Patrice Sicard compares Hugh of St Victor's evocation of a cosmic vision via *speculatio* in *De vanitate mundi* to that of Benedict's vision: *Diagrammes médiévaux et exégèse visuelle* (Paris, 1993), p. 237. Hugh uses that vision, however, to counteract Boethius' division of time and eternity.

¹⁰⁷ *Quodlibetales* I.1.a1; trans. S. Edwards, *Quodlibetal Questions 1 and 2* (Toronto, 1983), p. 29: 'Utrum beatus Benedictus in visione qua vidit totum mundum, divinam essentiam viderit'. The question recurs in *ST* II-II 180.a5.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Expositio super Job ad litteram*, Leonine 26, 19.23–9, p. 117, where Aquinas states that bodiliness precludes vision of the divine. See also the discussion in Ch. 4, p. 144.

¹⁰⁹ J.-P. Müller, 'La vision de saint Benoît dans l'interprétation des théologiens scolastiques', in Abbey of St Jerome (ed.), *Mélanges bénédictins* (Paris, 1947), pp. 145–201. The question of whether the beatific vision was possible before the final Judgement was one concern driving thirteenth-century quodlibetals about Benedict, but some, including Albert, insisted Benedict's vision was not of God but of the world (*mundus*): Müller, 'Vision', pp. 179–80. The most serious phase of controversy over the beatific vision, involving Pope John XXII, did not develop until the 1330s: C. W. Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York, 1995), pp. 283ff.

Thus, Trevet's scholastic pedigree could well have prompted a reference to Benedict here. But there was another important strand of discussion about Benedict which may have influenced Trevet's treatment of this passage, especially since, in the context of the *Consolation*, the question concerned vision, not of the divine essence, but of *time*. This other strand of discussion comes from yet another twelfth-century monk who asserted Benedict's special place among visionaries: Joachim of Fiore. Joachim devoted one of his early works to a *vita* of St Benedict (c.1186–7). Essentially a commentary on Gregory's *vita*, Joachim's work posits the evolution of monasticism within a cosmic pattern of history.¹¹⁰ Benedict, in fact, symbolized for Joachim the beginning of the sixth period of Church history and the third *status* of world history, the period of time which would usher in the new age of the Holy Spirit, when spiritual awareness and experiences (*dona spiritualia*) would increase.¹¹¹ Joachim repeated this important claim for Benedict in several other works, the *Liber de concordia*, *Expositio in apocalypsim*, and *Tractatus super quatuor evangelia*.¹¹²

In particular, it was Benedict's cosmic vision that was crucial for Joachim. Like Remigius, Joachim reworked Gregory's account to give the vision even greater significance. Benedict—'our prophet' (*noster propheta*)—ascended not a tower but, in Joachim's version, a mountain, echoing the ascent of Moses.¹¹³ Once at the summit, Benedict became filled with the Holy Spirit, was granted prophetic understanding (*spiritus prophetie*) of divine secrets (*archana consilia*), and glimpsed a heavenly light.¹¹⁴ Perhaps in echo of Joachim's own contemplative experiences, he compares Benedict's vision from the summit with the vision in which John saw the heavenly Jerusalem descending to earth (Rev. 21:10–11), a clear sign of the new

¹¹⁰ Stephen Wessley calls Joachim's choice of Benedict's life 'a genuinely rare subject for a commentary': "Bonum est Benedicto mutare locum": The Role of the "Life of Saint benedict" in Joachim of Fiore's Monastic Reform', *Revue bénédictine*, 90 (1980), p. 321. For further discussion of Benedict's significance to Joachim, see B. McGinn, 'Alter Moyses: The Role of Bernard of Clairvaux in the Thought of Joachim of Fiore', in J. R. Sommerfeldt (ed.), *Bernardus Magister* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1990), pp. 433–5.

¹¹¹ Joachim of Fiore, *Tractatus in expositionem vite et regule beati Benedicti*, ed. A. Patschovsky (Rome, 2008) II.3, p. 184.

¹¹² See the passages cited in McGinn: 'Alter Moyses', p. 434 n. 16.

¹¹³ In *expositionem vite* III.praef., p. 201. The mountain is the best place for contemplation (*ad contemplandum*), says Joachim (II.3, p. 177). In his *Liber de concordia* V.50, p. 84c, Joachim urges true *virii spirituales* to imitate Benedict by going up the mountain for a spiritual battle.

¹¹⁴ In *expositionem vite* III.praef., p. 202. In the *Liber de concordia*, ed. E. R. Daniel (Philadelphia, PA, 1983) II.1.5, p. 68, Joachim notes that the *ordo monachorum*, i.e. the initiation of the age of the Spirit, traces its descent in a line from the prophet Elisha to Benedict. (Daniel edited the first four books of the text, but the Venice text cited earlier (Ch. 4, p. 113 n. 18) contains a fifth book.)

age.¹¹⁵ Benedict's experience—greatly enhanced in Joachim's hands—becomes a prophetic vision of a momentous historical shift.

Trevet would certainly have been familiar with Aquinas's attacks on Joachim, but by the time he was writing the *Consolation* commentary, questions about visionaries, and especially about how visionaries saw time, were, if anything, even more heated than they had been in Thomas' day. Such questions could, indeed, hardly be avoided by a Dominican theologian at the turn of the century. The dangerous implications of Peter John Olivi's ideas among Franciscan Spirituals were by then growing evident. But the year 1300 itself saw numerous disturbances. In that year, the lay physician Arnald of Villanova (d.1311), who had connections with groups of Spirituals in southern France, published his predictions of the imminent arrival of the Antichrist and of a Joachimist new age to follow.¹¹⁶ These predictions attracted the attention of theologians at both Oxford and Paris, who did not give them a warm welcome. Arnald relates that he was accused of 'fantastic' prophetic claims and was rejected because he performed no miracles or signs.¹¹⁷ He initially responded to such accusations in terms reminiscent of Joachim: he did not claim to be a prophet, but only an interpreter of Scripture, so he needed no miracles.¹¹⁸ Those, furthermore, who said that a lay, married 'dreamer' ('sompniator') could not be inspired were wrong to think God could not bring forth truth through such a vessel.¹¹⁹ In his first trial in Paris in 1300, Arnald fashioned himself as a *speculator* of the Church, watching out with concern for its history and its future.¹²⁰ But by 1302, Arnald was claiming specific

¹¹⁵ *In expositionem vite* II.3, p. 177.

¹¹⁶ R. Lerner, 'Ecstatic Dissent', *Speculum*, 67 (1992), p. 44.

¹¹⁷ *Responsio ad vacillationes adversarii veritatis* (written 1306): 'fantasticus'; 'facebat se prophetam, cum neque faceret miracula nec ostenderet signa revellationis [*sic*]': ed. M. Batlori, in 'Dos nous Escrits Espirituals D'Arnau de Vilanova', *Analecta Sacra Tarracoenensia*, 28 (1955), p. 61. These claims rely on the same tropes as anti-Islam polemics. Robert Lerner has shown that Arnald ultimately escaped condemnation because he cured Boniface VIII of kidney stones: 'The Pope and the Doctor', *Yale Review*, 78 (1988–9), pp. 62–79.

¹¹⁸ *Responsio*, p. 61. As Vauchez notes, though, Arnald did not rely on Scripture alone but on prophetic texts such as Ps-Methodius, Sibylline writings, and the *Oraculum Cyrilli*: A. Vauchez, *Saints, prophètes et visionnaires* (Paris, 1999), pp. 122–3. For Joachim's claims, see Ch. 4, p. 113.

¹¹⁹ *Responsio*, p. 62.

¹²⁰ According to Arnald, his enemies accuse him of saying he sits upon a watch-tower as a prophet: 'vos sedetis super speculam, vos estis propheta', *Appellatio Arnaldi de Villanova ad apostolicam sedem*, ed. H. Denifle, in *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (Paris, 1889), ii, p. 88. Though Arnald denies this and claims only to be a *speculator ecclesie*, his enemies do not realize that 'the Spirit blows where it will' ('spiritus ubi vult spirat'), and the Lord gives wisdom (*sapientia*) even to children. Arnald may be appropriating the prudential version of *speculator* advanced by Gregory the Great: as prophet, the bishop/preacher is a 'speculator', *In Hiez.* XI.4, pp. 170–1.

prophetic revelations.¹²¹ Arnald's major theme, in fact, was much like Olivi's—true theology required a connection between Scripture and the movement of history. Prophecy should not be marginalized, institutionalized, or made ordinary. Engaged in polemical exchanges with Dominicans in southern France between 1302 and 1304, Arnald insisted that all his claims about the Antichrist could be found through the traditional exegesis of Scripture; what he objected to were the 'Thomists' ('thomatistas') whose obsessions with philosophy and the exegetical novelty of focusing on the literal sense led them to abandon the search for scriptural signs of the end times, confining the Scriptures to insights about the past, or even to abandon Scripture altogether.¹²² Exegesis of the spiritual senses, on the other hand, produced insights into the continued course of history. Such exegesis also encouraged Arnald to incorporate his own extra-canonical revelations about the Antichrist within that sacred history.

Spurred by Arnald's claims and hoping to offer some mediation, one of Trevet's Dominican *confrères*, John of Paris (or Quidort) (c.1255–1306), issued in 1300 a *Tractatus de antichristo et eius temporibus*, which examined all the evidence for an imminent arrival of the Antichrist.¹²³ John admitted that no one had been granted a definitive revelation of the actual time, but he believed that this divine obscurity was merely to encourage diligent investigation and that certain learned (*docti*) and holy (*sancti*) people—including Joachim of Fiore and Hildegard of Bingen—made good conjectures (*coniecturae*), either through the prophetic spirit or astronomical calculations.¹²⁴ John concluded that it was fairly clear that the Antichrist would arrive within the next three centuries.¹²⁵

That John of Paris's suggestions troubled other theologians for several years is evident by the extended response given to both John and Arnald by the Chancellor of Trevet's Oxford, Henry of Harclay (c.1270–1317). Harclay took up the issue in a *quaestio* in 1313: 'Whether astrologers or

¹²¹ Lerner, 'Ecstatic Dissent', pp. 44–5.

¹²² Santi, 'La vision de la fin des temps chez Arnaud de Villeneuve', in *Fin du monde et signes des temps*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 27 (Toulouse, 1992), pp. 111–13; Gregory, 'Escatologia', p. 172. Arnald wrote a tract entitled *Gladius iugulans Thomatistas* (1304), in which Thomas is himself a sign of the Antichrist: for extracts, see F. Ehrle, 'Arnaldo de Villanova ed i "Thomatiste"', *Gregorianum*, 1 (1920), pp. 498, 500, and see also pp. 496–8 for Arnald's attacks on contemporary (*moderni*) Paris theologians in his *Apologia de versutiis*.

¹²³ R. Lerner, *The Powers of Prophecy* (Berkeley, CA, 1983), pp. 64–5. A few contemporary Dominican tracts were explicitly Joachimist, including Robert d'Uzès's (d.1296) and Dietrich of Apolda's (1297): M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 162ff.

¹²⁴ *De antichristo*, in *Expositio magni prophete Joachim* (Venice, 1516), pp. 44r, 46r–47r.

¹²⁵ *De antichristo*, p. 51v.

other calculators can prove the second coming of Christ'.¹²⁶ Harclay asked whether this could be proved *per theologiam, per poetriam, or per philosophiam*.¹²⁷ 'No' was his emphatic response—neither theology, nor poetry, nor philosophy had that sort of prophetic knowledge. John and Arnald were simply wrong.

The year 1300, furthermore, saw the burning in Parma of Gerard Segarelli, leader of the Apostolic Brethren since 1260, and the consequent succession of Fra Dolcino, who would come to a bloody end in 1307 with his followers, accused of false and heretical prophecies and teachings.¹²⁸ Trevet would have been familiar with this Italian context, since he spent several months in the Florentine Dominican house at Santa Maria Novella while finishing his Boethius commentary.¹²⁹ The Dominican inquisitor Bernard Gui's summary of the Apostolic Brethren a few years later offers a clear indication of the issues many perceived to be at stake. Dolcino, Gui says, was a madman who predicted many things and claimed to have received the spirit of prophetic understanding (*spiritus intelligentie*).¹³⁰ Significantly, Gui relates further that St Benedict was for Dolcino the model for the third *status* of Church history, and that Benedict had been followed by Francis and Dominic.¹³¹ But even those saints' influence was waning, so Dolcino posited his own movement as the replacement, initiating the final age of history.

In light of the controversies surrounding Arnald, John of Paris, and the cautionary events of northern Italy, Trevet's Boethius commentary could hardly avoid a hugely problematic and topical issue. Determining what prophets could and could not know was not simply an intellectual exercise in Trevet's day. Within this context, then, when Trevet reached the passage where most Boethius commentators claimed that Benedict could

¹²⁶ 'Die Quaestio Heinrichs von Harclay über die zweite Ankunft Christi' ed. F. Pelster, *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà*, 1 (1951), pp. 25–82: 'Utrum astrologi vel quicumque calculatores possint probare secundum adventum Christi'.

¹²⁷ 'Die Quaestio Heinrichs', p. 53.

¹²⁸ Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 242ff.

¹²⁹ Dean, 'Dedication', pp. 599–600.

¹³⁰ Gui, *De secta illorum qui se dicunt esse de ordine apostolorum*, ed. A. Segarizzi in L. Muratori (ed.), *Raccolta degli storici italiani*, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 9/5 (Città di Castello, 1907), pp. 19–20: 'Dolcino passed on a pestilential teaching and predicted many future things (*futura predixit*) by a spirit (*spiritus*) not so much prophetic (*propheticus*) as fanatic and insane (*phanaticus et insanus*), asserting and fabricating (*confingens*) that he had a revelation (*revelatio*) from God and the spirit of understanding of the prophets (*spiritus intelligentie prophetarum*)... and that he was specially sent by God and chosen with revelations made to him about present and future things, which he asserts will soon come upon good and bad alike in these present days so as to open the prophecies and understanding of the writings (*intelligentia scripturarum*) of the Old and New Testaments'.

¹³¹ *De secta illorum*, pp. 20–1.

see all of time in a transcendent moment of divine vision, Trevet rejected this tradition by manoeuvring around it. Benedict receives no mention, and Trevet gives a different answer, undermining one of the paradigmatic moments of prophetic experience and replacing it with a modest, naturalized model of ethical judgement.

Trevet agrees that through complete adherence to God one can escape the limits imposed on human action through fate.¹³² But when he describes what he means by this, it is clear he has something in mind very different from earlier commentators. Trevet is not speaking of a transcendent miraculous vision; rather, it is simply an ethical stance, the cultivation of an inner indifference to temporal things, reminiscent of Stoic detachment:

they are more free from fate because they care least what happens through fate, since they despise the temporal things which are disposed in fate's order. Thus they have a more whole and quiet mind than the rest of men.¹³³

There is no hint that this detachment results in a greater vision of time's sweep; indeed, one should not care what will happen in the future. Trevet argues instead that the vicissitudes of time should have little effect on a holy person, whose experience of temporal events should then grant a degree of insight into God's will. Echoing the Thomistic avoidance of rapturous contemplation, Trevet emphasizes the importance of ethical action over mystical vision.

But Trevet is not simply interested in Stoic detachment. He accepts that fortune is constant in its continual mutability—and he follows William of Conches in pointing out that this mutability occurs within the temporal unfolding of providence's rational order (*ratio*).¹³⁴ What Trevet adds, however, is that this unfolding, experienced as fate, occurs through the mediation of secondary causes, that is, through people's individual choices, free human decisions.¹³⁵ This emphasis differs distinctly from the Calcidian/Stoic model, where freedom lies in one's ability to resist internally what fate imposes. Trevet's secondary causes have a firm place in the temporal order: people should not be swept away by temporal experiences, but neither can they somehow escape their burdens within time and history.

¹³² *Super Boecio*, IV.p6, p. 616.

¹³³ *Super Boecio*, IV.p6, p. 616: 'liberiores sunt a fato pro eo quod minime curant quid fato eveniat eo quod temporalia que fatali ordine disponuntur contempnunt. Unde et ceteris hominibus animum integriorem et quietiorem'.

¹³⁴ *Super Boecio*, IV.p6, p. 609. Ps-William agrees: *In Consolationem*, MS Royal 15.B. III, fol. 35v.

¹³⁵ *Super Boecio*, IV.p6, pp. 613 and 610: 'mediantibus quibusdam causis secundaris [*sic*]'.

Trevet's ideas are consistent with the trend noted by H. G. Gelber, namely, that the beginning of the fourteenth century marked a shift in Dominican concerns: after having spent the end of the thirteenth century defending Thomistic metaphysics against its detractors, Dominican scholars turned to new interests, especially 'to a concern for ethics'.¹³⁶ The ethical view of the world which Trevet emphasizes might be enhanced by grace, but there is little that is miraculous about it, little of Benedict's rapture in it. Trevet transforms the Boethian passage which, for his predecessors, confirmed Benedict's transcendent, atemporal vision into a more natural perspective on the temporal: in other words, a prudential awareness.¹³⁷ Trevet's interweaving of the prophetic and the contemplative does not resemble Gregory's miraculous, all-encompassing vision, but is rather more 'down-to-earth', quite literally. When Trevet speaks of overcoming time, he is describing the more mundane struggle to live prudently and rightly in the world.

Trevet's emphasis on being grounded in time determines his approach to prophecy. The sense of rootedness, first of all, gives him an optimism about temporality even greater than that displayed by Hugh of St Victor, for whom the use of mutability still meant gathering oneself up safely into an ark. While Hugh insisted that people recognize they are exiles while on earth,¹³⁸ Trevet argues the reverse: a good person can make any place his true homeland, using the goods of fortune when they are granted and remaining indifferent when they are not.¹³⁹ This optimism is made more explicit in Trevet's discussion of the relationship of time to eternity in the famous prayer of Philosophy in *Consolation* III metre 9. The passage had been very popular with William of Conches and other twelfth-century thinkers as an eloquent expression of God's eternal stability in opposition to the flux of time.¹⁴⁰ William condemned what he believed was Plato's teaching in the *Timaeus* that God had created a disordered (*inordinatum*)

¹³⁶ *It Could Have Been Otherwise: Contingency and Necessity in Dominican Theology at Oxford, 1300–1350* (Leiden, 2004), p. 36. See also Mulchahey's discussion of the early fourteenth-century expansion of Dominican teaching of moral theology, including the use of Aristotle's *Ethics*: M. M. Mulchahey, 'First the Bow is Bent in Study—': *Dominican Education before 1350* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 327–36. On Trevet as a defender of Aquinas, see Catto, 'Theology', p. 513, and Nauta, 'Scholastic Context', pp. 47–9.

¹³⁷ Trevet also insists that there is no 'natural prophecy', i.e. no knowledge of one's future: 'nichil potest per rationem presciri nisi quod certum habet eventum' (*Super Boecio* V.p6, pp. 778–9).

¹³⁸ *Didascalicon de studio legendi*, ed. T. Offergeld (Freiburg, 1997) III.19, p. 268: 'Omnis mundus philosophantibus exsilium est'.

¹³⁹ *Super Boecio*, I.p5, p.155; II.p2, p. 197.

¹⁴⁰ William devotes more space (thirty-five pages in Nauta's edition) to the exposition of III.m9 than to the rest of Book III combined, excluding III.m12. Otto of Freising, John of Salisbury, and Peter Comestor, among others, refer to this poem when articulating the relationship of the eternal to the temporal: Courcelle, *Consolation*, pp. 180–1.

world, and he interpreted Genesis' account of Creation not as a description of days passing in temporal succession and gathering greater order each day, but rather as a figurative expression of the perfection that had already been established and simply needed to be revealed. Trevet, by contrast, resists William's notion, even calling it heresy (*heresis*). Trevet says that God *can* create things in an unformed manner ('sub quadam informitate'), so long as the order (*ordo*) will eventually be granted to them.¹⁴¹ God creates by allowing order to come at different times: the arrangement (*dispositio*) of things can be fitting at one time but require a different *dispositio* at another.¹⁴² Much like Hugh of St Victor, then, Trevet allows for a variety of affairs, for a less static notion of time, in which the flow of time through various situations is natural (*naturale*), so natural that Trevet does not even allow, as Hugh did, a prophetic perspective above it. Development can occur, is expected to, and people are part of—and contribute to—that development in the varieties of historical change.

For that reason, an account of history must be set within a proper understanding of the relationship between Creation and time. Human actions are responsible and participatory secondary causes within time and history, helping to realize God's providence in the world. In Trevet's work of universal history, the *Historia* (composed 1327–8), he spends a good deal of the opening section describing Creation and attempting to discern precisely when time actually began, not only in which season, but on which day.¹⁴³ In contrast to Augustine and to Hugh of St Victor, Trevet insists that time began not when God said 'fiat lux' but rather when God hung the stars in the sky. Time is a physical attribute based on the motion of bodies.¹⁴⁴ Trevet's conception of history suggests that although truth is eternal, its perception and experience are intrinsically temporal. There is no escape from time, nor should there be. An experience like Benedict's cannot, for Trevet, lead to an atemporal perspective, even for a moment.

Trevet's reworking of prophetic vision in his commentary on Boethius fits well with what we saw in Chapter Two, namely the reworking of prophetic texts in his Psalms commentary, written about fifteen years

¹⁴¹ *Super Boecio* III.m9, pp. 396–7.

¹⁴² *Super Boecio* III.m9, pp. 397–8. See also Nauta, 'Magis sit Platonius', pp. 182–3.

¹⁴³ London, British Library, MS Royal 13.B.XVI. For further background, see R. Dean, 'Nicholas Trevet, Historian', in J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (eds), *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays presented to Richard William Hunt* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 335–9.

¹⁴⁴ *Historia*, MS Royal 13.B.XVI, fols 1v–2r. Contrast Augustine's *De civ.* XI.6 and Hugh of St Victor's *Homiliae in Salomonis Ecclesiasten*, PL 175.128–9. For more on Aristotle's influence on thirteenth-century scholastic concepts of time as physical motion, see R. Fox, *Time and Eternity in Mid-Thirteenth-Century Thought* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 135–47.

later. Viewing the Psalms commentary now within a context of polemics about prophecy, we can see how Trevet's ideas about time and history encourage him to declare the most important feature of the Psalms to be their artificial order, that is, their rearrangement from the natural order of history in a manner akin to poetry and to music. The gift of prophetic ordering no longer evokes a contemplative individual high above time whose sacred narrative hides allegorical mysteries beneath a historical veil. Instead, the gift is expressed through the harmonious, persuasive, and artful arrangement of the literal sense via the verbal powers of a sacred poet.

At the same time, Trevet adopts Aquinas's Christocentric reading of prophetic texts: both signifier and signified (both David and Christ) are deliberately intended by the prophet and are thus expressions of the literal sense (*litteralis sensus*).¹⁴⁵ The Psalms prophesy Christ, but not in a way that requires a reading of other senses. Christ is present in Scripture, not through obscure allegory, but rather as the transparent referent to all literal statements.¹⁴⁶ The only true meaning of prophetic statements in Scripture concerns Christ. The Jews, Trevet says, confuse the twofold intentions of prophets, taking the secondary meaning as primary and therefore supposing that David's prophecies were to be fulfilled among those to whom they were given. Hence, they believed that David's promise of future goods (in Psalm 145) was fulfilled by the end of the Babylonian Captivity; Trevet argues, however, that the emperor Vespasian brought about yet another captivity, thus undermining the non-Christological understanding.¹⁴⁷ Both Jewish and Christian interpretations are literal (*secundum litteram*); one, however, is truthful while the other is a shadow.¹⁴⁸ A prophet cannot speak in any meaningful way about history ahead of his own time, except to speak about Christ.

In Trevet's mind, therefore, the error of the Jews is akin to the error of the Joachimites. Both groups attempt to use sacred prophecy to illumine future human events; both incorrectly take their surface vision of history as the real intended meaning instead of recognizing that both surfaces have their sacred meaning only in Christ's Incarnation. In the Sixth Age, one

¹⁴⁵ MS Bodl. 738, fol. 27v.

¹⁴⁶ MS Bodl. 738, fol. 27r: '[the words] are like apertures of this parable or a sign (*signum*) through which we look upon the hidden (*latens*) and signified thing (*signatum*) concerning Christ'. Rita Copeland describes how metaphorical language at the end of the thirteenth century was becoming a 'transparent passage to meaning,' but she believes this robbed it of delight, whereas Trevet emphasizes the opposite: see 'Rhetoric and the Politics of the Literal Sense in Medieval Literary Theory', in P. Boitani and A. Torti (eds), *Interpretation: Medieval and Modern* (Woodbridge, 1993), p. 13.

¹⁴⁷ MS Bodl. 738, fol. 246r.

¹⁴⁸ MS Bodl. 738, fol. 40v.

cannot expect to find providential meaning in fortune or history, since Christ has already established history's true reference point—himself. Christ is the only proper object of prophecy, while any other vision can only be prudential. Prophetic consolation, therefore, must take place on verbal or ethical levels; there are no consolations to be found in speculations about the future.

IV. TRAGIC VISION

Fortune's effects in history—and consolation for those effects—is an intense concern of the poetic genre of tragedy, and it is surely no coincidence that this particular form was one of Trevet's abiding interests. Taking a wide view of 'tragedy', medieval thinkers had long accepted the relationship between history, prophecy, prudence, consolation, and tragedy.¹⁴⁹ This expanded use of the term was evident in the patristic period, when narratives about historical suffering, such as Jeremiah's Lamentations, were called 'tragedies'.¹⁵⁰ In the twelfth century, the historian Otto of Freising explicitly stated that his work, which documented suffering and sought to provide consolation amidst the mutabilities of fortune, contained more *tragediae* than *historiae*.¹⁵¹ For John of Salisbury, life was a tragedy (*tragedia*) because of the difficulty in discerning a *ratio* underlying contemporary history.¹⁵² Indeed, an inspired, prophetic vision of history—such as Hugh of St Victor's Solomon had—was often viewed as necessary to overcome the tragedies of history.¹⁵³ Boethius, of course, was one of the supreme medieval examples of this consoling vision, and his own reference to tragedy as a lament for Fortune's indiscriminate blows

¹⁴⁹ I follow here Kelly's discussion of 'applied' uses of the term 'tragedy', i.e. not restricting it to a literary genre but rather connecting it to suffering and patient endurance: *Tragedy*, pp. 23–4.

¹⁵⁰ Kelly, *Tragedy*, p. 25. A tragedy could be any fall into misfortune, even if the ending was happy—Boethius himself spoke of Christ's entrance into the world as 'tanta tragoedia': *Contra Eutychem et Nestorium*, ed. H. F. Stewart et al., in *The Theological Tractates* (Cambridge, MA, 1973) V.86.

¹⁵¹ *Chronica*, prol., p. 7. Otto saw in such miserable events ('mortalium calamitatum tragediae') the providential purpose of teaching men through misery to turn to their Creator. Kelly states, 'By implication, perhaps, the whole world of time, or at least its recorded history, could be seen as a single great tragedy': *Tragedy*, p. 87. Gillespie notes that the twelfth-century text, *Ysagoge in theologiam*, 'argues that tragedy teaches contempt for Fortune and tolerance of labour and tribulation': 'Classical Authors', p. 210. Cf. Ch. 4, pp. 141–2.

¹⁵² *Policraticus I–IV* III.8, p. 192.

¹⁵³ Augustine argued that the Fall gave rise to history, both sacred and secular: *De civ. XIII.14* and *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, CCSL 38–40, ed. E. Dekkers and J. Fraipont (Turnhout, 1956), 65.11.

spurred his commentators to discussion.¹⁵⁴ Trevet also used these concepts in his commentary to link the *Consolation* to tragic poetry: both revealed the true nature of *fortuna* so that one was always prepared for its mutabilities.¹⁵⁵

For Trevet, the pre-eminent tragic poet was Seneca, whose plays Trevet was the first in the Middle Ages to gloss, from 1314 to 1317. Seneca as tragedian was only a thirteenth-century discovery,¹⁵⁶ but he already existed for medieval readers as a moral philosopher sympathetic to Christianity, a writer whose epistles often travelled bound up with those of Boethius, suggesting a perceived affinity.¹⁵⁷ Trevet argued that Seneca's outstanding moral sense (*virtus*) was conveyed by his tragedies, which he wrote for the following purpose:

so that, in the custom of prudent (*prudentes*) doctors, who, having wrapped the bitter antidote in honeyed sweetness, administer them to purge humours and foster health, he might instill in weak minds ethical teachings joyfully through the delights of fables (*fabulae*).¹⁵⁸

The first thing to note in Trevet's account is the similarity to traditional defences of poetry: as part of ethics, poetry teaches using *fabulae* which are, for Trevet, delightful.¹⁵⁹ Trevet had accepted the combination of

¹⁵⁴ *De consolatione* II.p2.12. William of Conches emphasizes that one can judge the mutabilities of fortune in tragedies: *Super Boetium*, p. 104. Ps-William says such tragic mutabilities crush when unforeseen (*improvis*): *In Consolationem*, MS Royal 15.B.III, fol. 39v.

¹⁵⁵ *Super Boecio* II.p2, p. 200: 'clamoses poetarum cotidie in theatro recitancium tragedias nichil aliud continebant quam mutabilitatem Fortune'.

¹⁵⁶ Kelly, *Tragedy*, p. 125.

¹⁵⁷ Troncarelli, *Boethiana aetas*, p. 147. Trevet claims he became interested in Seneca because of Boethius' mention of him in the (Ps-Boethian) *De disciplina scoliarum*: Dean, 'Life and Works', p. 46. A spurious collection of letters between Seneca and St Paul was known during the Middle Ages: *Il carteggio apocrifo di Seneca e san Paolo*, ed. L. B. Palagi (Florence, 1978). MS Bodl. 292 contains Trevet's commentaries on *De civitate dei* and on Seneca's tragedies, followed by a commentary on the Seneca/Paul correspondence, though Dean is doubtful the latter is Trevet's: 'MS. Bodl. 292 and the Canon of Nicholas Trevet's Works', *Speculum*, 17 (1942), pp. 243–9. For more on the medieval esteem for Seneca as moral guide, see G. G. Meersseman, 'Seneca maestro di spiritualità nei suoi opuscoli apocrifi dal XII al XV secolo', *IMU*, 16 (1973), pp. 43–133.

¹⁵⁸ *Epistola ad Nicholaum Ostiensis et Vellerrensis episcopum*, ed. E. Franceschini, in 'Glosse e commenti medievali a Seneca tragico', in *Studi e note di filologia latina medievale* (Milan, 1938), pp. 29–30: 'ut, more prudentium medicorum, qui amara antidota melles involuta dulcore gusto inoffenso ad humorum purgamentum et sanitatis fomentum transmittunt, ethica documenta fabularum oblectamentis immersa cum iocunditate mentibus infirmis ingereret'. Ps-Paul says Seneca wrote 'allegorice et aenigmaticae': *Il carteggio*, Ep. 13, pp. 73–4.

¹⁵⁹ *Expositio Senece*, ed. E. Franceschini, in 'Glosse e commenti', pp. 34–5. Trevet says (p. 35) the delight (*delectatio*) of tragic poetry is in the service of ethics (*correctio morum*), by proposing things worthy of both praise (*laus*) or blame (*vituperium*). Alemannus' translation

philosophical and poetic *fabulae* in his Boethius commentary, connecting them to the usage of ancient poet-theologians, but his *accessus* to the tragedies reveals another layer of understanding. Indeed, he uses Seneca to resist Augustine's view of secular fables. Trevet begins his *accessus* to Seneca by introducing the three types of theology found in Augustine's *City of God*, where Augustine attacked not only pagan religion but also 'poetic theology' (*theologia poetica*).¹⁶⁰ Trevet points out that the fictional (*fabulosum*) type of theology used by poetry is appropriate for the theatre, in both tragedy and comedy; the natural theology (*naturale*) of the philosophers looks at the world; and civic (*civile*) theology is the worship done in temples. Yet, Trevet does not want a blanket condemnation of poetic theology's *fabulae*: Boethius used them, as did Seneca, for delight and instruction. Trevet notes, then, that Augustine in the *City of God* attacked *civic* theology even more than poetic, and that Augustine there drew particularly from Seneca's book against *superstitiones*.¹⁶¹ The pagan priests (*sacerdotes*), Trevet argues elsewhere, were the real problem, since their immoral lies were soon translated onto the stage by immoral poets.¹⁶² What Trevet implies, therefore, is that since Seneca did not accept superstitions, he was not one of the immoral poets. The tragedian Seneca and his *fabulae* are, in one specific sense, redeemed.

As a result, Trevet can also reclaim poetic theology. Indeed, Trevet's description of Seneca's pedagogical purpose is remarkably similar to the one that he ascribes to Boethius: both Boethius' music and Seneca's fables rely on sweet medicine to fulfil their shared purpose—freeing people from the grasp of temporal goods.¹⁶³ In other words, both Boethius and Seneca were *tragici*, poetic writers seeking theological remedies against the flux of time and the vicissitudes of history. Tragedy, furthermore, is a song, a mournful *carmen*.¹⁶⁴ Thus, the tragic poet as prophet uses music's

of Averroes/Aristotle concurs: 'omnis oratio poetica aut est vituperatio aut est laudatio', *Averrois expositio poeticae*, ed. L. Miniello-Paluello, in *De arte poetica*, Aristoteles Latinus 33, 2nd edn (Brussels, 1968), p. 41.

¹⁶⁰ *Expositio Seneca*, pp. 34–5. The source is *De civ.* VI.7.

¹⁶¹ *Expositio Seneca*, p. 34. Trevet refers to Seneca's lost work, *On Superstition*, fragments of which are found in Augustine's *De civ.* VI.10–11. Augustine attacks pagan theatre in *De civ.* II.8 and IV.26.

¹⁶² Commentary on *De civ.*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 292, fol. 138r.

¹⁶³ Trevet explicitly equated Seneca's attitude towards fate and fortune with Boethius' in *Expositio Ypolitii*, ed. C. Fossati, *Commento alle Phaedra di Seneca* (Florence, 2007), p. 77.

¹⁶⁴ The phrase *carmen luctuosum* ('mournful song') appears both in Trevet's Boethius commentary (*Super Boecio* II.p2, p. 200) and in his *accessus* to Seneca (*Expositio Seneca*, p. 35). Numerous sources linked tragedy to song: Isidore, *Etymologiae* XVIII.45; Ugucione of Pisa, *Derivationes*, ed. E. Cecchini and G. Arbizzoni, ii (Florence, 2004), pp. 862–3; William of Conches, *Super Boetium* II.p2, p. 105; and Ps-William, *In Consolationem* II.p2, MS Royal 15.B.III, fol. 39v.

harmonies to strengthen, console, delight, and order the soul so that it is able to face the mutabilities of history.

V. PROPHECY IN AVIGNON

Trevet's commentaries on Boethius' *Consolation* and on Seneca's tragedies represent not only a thematic nexus; they also provide a cultural bridge between Trevet's outlook and that of Italian humanism. Indeed, it is difficult to tell in which direction the influence most flowed. Trevet had a personal connection to Italy, travelling there perhaps more than once. In addition to his stay with the Florentine Dominicans,¹⁶⁵ he may have been at the Dominican general chapter held in Padua in 1308. Trevet's particular interest in Senecan tragedy, moreover, may have been encouraged by encounters with members of the Paduan humanist circle in Padua itself, in other parts of Italy, or even in Avignon, where Trevet possibly resided from 1308 to 1312.¹⁶⁶ He was certainly the scholar most familiar with Seneca's tragedies outside of Italy.

Within a few years, he was also the scholar of Seneca most familiar to Seneca's readers *within* Italy. Even as Trevet's Boethius commentary came to exert a significant influence in Italy as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century, Trevet's tragedy commentaries arrived there almost immediately after completion. They were especially popular in Padua, where they complemented humanists' own rediscovery of Seneca.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, based on manuscript evidence, Trevet's writings seem to have been more highly sought-after in Italy than in England.¹⁶⁸ His interest in classical texts clearly suited the emerging humanistic impulses on the continent.¹⁶⁹ Trevet was writing the first complete commentaries on Seneca's tragedies at exactly the same time that the Paduan Albertino Mussato was composing the first imitation of a Senecan tragedy in the

¹⁶⁵ See p. 177.

¹⁶⁶ Dean, 'Dedication', pp. 599–600; R. J. Dean, 'Cultural Relations in the Middle Ages: Nicholas Trevet and Nicholas of Prato', *Studies in Philology*, 45 (1948), p. 560.

¹⁶⁷ C. M. Monti, 'Il corpus senecano dei padovani: Manoscritti e loro datazione', *IMU*, 50 (2009) pp. 51–99.

¹⁶⁸ Dean, 'Life and Works', p. 232.

¹⁶⁹ By mid-century, other connections between Trevet and humanists had developed: Petrarch's copy of Livy was likely owned previously by Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, who used Trevet's Livy commentary to make marginal notes: R. Weiss, 'Notes on the Popularity of the Writings of Nicholas Trevet, O.P., in Italy during the First Half of the Fourteenth Century', *Dominican Studies*, 1 (1948), p. 264. The Livy commentary was in the papal library at Avignon, having been commissioned by Pope John XXII: Dean, 'Life and Works', pp. 46–7, 51. Boccaccio also relied on Trevet's Livy gloss in his commentary on Dante's *Inferno*: Weiss, 'Popularity', pp. 264–5.

Middle Ages.¹⁷⁰ Mussato was actually one of the earliest Italian readers of Trevet's Seneca glosses (soon after 1315),¹⁷¹ and there is a striking overlap in the two men's literary pursuits, which I explore more fully in the next chapter.

The critical link between Trevet and Italy was provided by the Dominican Cardinal Nicholas Albertini of Prato (d.1321). Whether the cardinal and Trevet ever met in person is uncertain, though the general chapter at Padua was one of several possible venues. What is certain is that Albertini, who became Dean of the College of Cardinals in Avignon (and part of the conclave that elected John XXII in 1316), knew of Trevet's reputation as a scholar: he had read Trevet's commentaries on Boethius and on Seneca the Elder's *Declamationes* (c.1314).¹⁷² In 1314, Albertini, who took a keen interest in literary affairs, wrote to Trevet in Oxford asking him to compose a commentary on Seneca's tragedies, which, he noted regretfully, were themselves too obscure for him.¹⁷³ The cardinal was struggling with the classical style and allusions of the plays, which had become popular in Avignon's literary circles; he needed help.¹⁷⁴ As Smalley notes, Cardinal Albertini 'sought in scholastic Oxford what he could not find in the Midi', a sign that we should not 'antedate the split between humanism and scholasticism' which eventually developed later in the fourteenth century.¹⁷⁵ Seneca certainly offered common ground. By 1317, Trevet had composed commentaries on all the plays and sent them to Avignon.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, not only did Albertini subsequently become Trevet's patron, but he—and his influence at Avignon and in Italy—became thereafter the most likely conduit through which Trevet grew so widely

¹⁷⁰ R. Weiss, *The Dawn of Humanism in Italy* (London, 1947), p. 10.

¹⁷¹ Guido Billanovich, 'Abbozzi e postille del Mussato nel Vaticano Lat. 1769', *IMU*, 28 (1985), pp. 24–6.

¹⁷² Dean 'Cultural Relations', pp. 548–9. The cardinal's secretary may have been a friend of Trevet's during his time in Florence: E. Panella, 'Priori di Santa Maria Novella di Firenze, 1221–1325', *Memorie domenicane*, n.s., 17 (1986), pp. 259–63.

¹⁷³ ['Epistola'], ed. E. Franceschini, in 'Glosse e comment', p. 29: 'tantis est obscuritibus plenus'. Trevet's response is the letter mentioned in n. 158 (p. 183).

¹⁷⁴ Dean 'Cultural Relations', pp. 549–50. A similar desire to explain difficult classical references (and the recognition of such a need) motivated Trevet's *City of God* commentary, indicated by its full title: *Expositio historiarum extraneorum dictorumque poeticorum quae tanguntur ab augustino in libro de civitate dei*: MS Bodl. 292, fol. 119v. In the sixteenth century, Juan Luis Vives even chided Trevet for not dealing there with sacred things but with 'poemata et historias': cited in Dean, 'Life and Works', p. 141.

¹⁷⁵ *English Friars*, p. 61.

¹⁷⁶ On 31 July 1317, Trevet's *Liber tragediarum Seneca cum expositione* (now Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 1650) entered the papal library at Avignon: P. Mascoli (ed.), Nicholas Trevet, *Commento alle Phoenissae di Seneca* (Bari, 2007), p. 16 n. 12.

known in Italy.¹⁷⁷ And the most likely cause of the cardinal's interest in Seneca and of Seneca's popularity in Avignon was the Paduan humanists, especially Mussato, whom Albertini seems to have met at the court of the emperor Henry VII in 1311.¹⁷⁸

Nicholas Albertini of Prato's connection to the two most prominent readers of Seneca in the early fourteenth century, Trevet and Mussato, both of whom also considered the controversial issue of 'poetic theology' and prophetic inspiration, needs to be set alongside the cardinal's role as a vociferous opponent of the apocalypticism of Spiritual Franciscans, a task in which he was engaged at precisely the same time. The juxtaposition is, at the very least, a striking one. The 'Spiritual problem' had, by this point, grown beyond an internecine Franciscan struggle: Pope Clement V failed to resolve the issue at the 1312 Council of Vienne, and, with Spiritual houses in open rebellion against their order, John XXII grew increasingly impatient with the disturbances, as questions of poverty and Joachimism intertwined, investing everything, in Spirituals' eyes, with eschatological significance.¹⁷⁹ This was especially true in southern France, where Olivi's legacy was strong, and where he was revered as a saint.¹⁸⁰ At the same time

¹⁷⁷ Weiss considered the 'best proof' of Trevet's influence in Italy the fact that a lay notary in Arezzo, Ser Simone, possessed five commentaries by Trevet (on Boethius, Livy, the tragedies, the *Declamations*, and *De officio misse*), which he left to the Dominicans of that town in 1338: 'Popularity', p. 265. The possession of so many books of Trevet's by a layman would indeed have been a great indication of Trevet's influence, except for extraordinary circumstances: Ser Simone had been the notary for Cardinal Albertini's will in Avignon in 1321, and Albertini apparently bequeathed his collection to Simone, who then brought the books back to Arezzo (Dean, 'Cultural Relations', p. 563). Dean speculates that Simone's connection with the cardinal was perhaps through Petrarch's father, who had brought his family from Arezzo to Avignon in 1313; Albertini also took interest in the young Petrarch, who was later an admirer of the cardinal (Dean, 'Cultural Relations', pp. 549 n. 15, 563–4). For the complete contents of Simone's will, see U. Pasqui, 'La biblioteca d'un notaro aretino del secolo XIV', *Archivio storico italiano*, 5th ser., 4 (1899), pp. 250–5.

¹⁷⁸ Giuseppe Billanovich, *La tradizione del testo di Livio e le origini dell'umanesimo*, i (Padua, 1981), p. 45. Both Mussato and another Paduan humanist, Rolando da Piazzola, were at the imperial court while the cardinal was there, and Mussato mentions in his *Historia Augusta* the cardinal's assistance (Billanovich, *Tradizione*, pp. 45–6). Both Mussato and Rolando, furthermore, were ambassadors to Boniface VIII in 1302 when Albertini was papal vicar. The cardinal was deeply involved in Italian politics, acting as papal legate and intermediary in Florence's civil strife in 1304, a role which occasioned the writing of Dante's earliest surviving epistle, addressed to Albertini: *Epistolae*, ed. P. Toynbee (Oxford, 1920) Ep. 1, pp. 1–10.

¹⁷⁹ D. Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans* (University Park, PA, 2001), chs 5–8. It is hardly surprising that John XXII refused to consider Joachim's case for canonization: Vauchez, *Saints*, p. 199.

¹⁸⁰ By 1305, pilgrims were reported at Olivi's tomb in Narbonne, until Conventual Franciscans destroyed it in 1318: D. Burr, *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom* (Philadelphia, PA, 1993), p. 199, and *Spiritual Franciscans*, pp. 211–12, 248.

that an inquisitor was putting four Spirituals to death in Marseille in 1318 and blaming Olivi as their inspiration, Pope John was assigning Cardinal Albertini to oversee an examination of Olivi's Apocalypse Commentary as a way of stamping out the growing challenges to ecclesiastical authority.¹⁸¹ The following year, Albertini would also be involved in the legal proceedings against the Spiritual leader Bernard Délicieux.¹⁸²

Olivi's Apocalypse commentary, originally written in 1292, had heightened the dangerous connections between Joachimism, visionaries, and Spiritual Franciscan views on poverty. Albertini extracted passages from the commentary and assigned them to a theological committee, whose report—which in one case compared Olivi's thought to Gerard of Borgo San Donnino's 'Eternal Gospel'—ultimately led John XXII to condemn the text in 1326.¹⁸³ But even before that, in the 1318 bull *Gloriosam ecclesiam*, John had attacked Spiritual arguments that there were two Churches (carnal and spiritual), that priests in the carnal Church were no longer valid ministers of sacraments, and that, like Montanus and Priscilla before them, they 'see the Gospel as fulfilled for the first time in them, declaring that the promise of the Holy Spirit had been fulfilled in them rather than in the apostles at Pentecost', combining this belief with ridiculous dreams about the Antichrist.¹⁸⁴

John XXII also recognized Olivi's posited connection between Joachimist expectations and an increase in contemplative and visionary experience, especially that which spurned intellectual knowledge. Even before John came to power, he would have been well aware of recent events in Paris: in 1310 there was a simultaneous condemnation both of Guiard of Cressonessart's Joachimist/Franciscan belief in himself as an apostle of a new age of evangelical poverty and of Marguerite of Porete's promotion of ecstatic divine union and criticism of theological learning. These condemnations had confirmed for ecclesiastical authorities across Europe the links between Joachimism and anti-hierarchical, anti-learned visionaries.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans*, pp. 206–7. Another committee, headed by the Dominican Pierre de la Palud and the General of the Carmelite Order, Guido Terreni, investigated a Catalan work inspired by Olivi: *Spiritual Franciscans*, p. 207.

¹⁸² A. M. Ghisalberti, ed., *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, i (Rome, 1960), s.v. 'Albertini, Niccolò'. On Bernard, see Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans*, pp. 191ff.

¹⁸³ Burr, *Peaceable*, p. 204.

¹⁸⁴ *Gloriosam ecclesiam*, in *Bullarium franciscanum romanorum pontificum*, ed. G. C. Sbaraglia, v (Rome, 1898) p. 141. Cf. the earlier discussion of Montanism: Ch. 4, pp. 118–20.

¹⁸⁵ Guiard said he experienced *intellectus scripturarum*: Trial document, ed. P. Verdeyen, 'Le procès d'inquisition contre Marguerite Porete et Guiard de Cressonessart (1309–1310)', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 81 (1986), p. 66. Lerner has recently shown Guiard's dependence on ideas ultimately traceable to Olivi: 'Addenda on an Angel', in S. Field et al. (eds), *Marguerite Porete et le Miroir des simples âmes: Perspectives historiques*,

Suspicion of these links became a key theme of John XXII's papacy. One of the alleged errors in Olivi's work which John and Albertini's advisory committee focused on was the notion that the age of the Spirit would be better than the age of the apostles and would bring an increase of knowledge and experiences that were 'gustative and palpativae' (*gustativa et palpativa*).¹⁸⁶ Pope John himself explicitly warned against the belief that people could have a comprehensive vision of God in this life, a belief he seems to have attributed to Olivi.¹⁸⁷ The bishop of Florence, Francesco Silvestri, another theologian consulted by John, was disturbed that, rather than seeing the visions of Moses and Paul as exceptions, Olivi had turned their experience into a general and persistent state in the Sixth Age of Church history.¹⁸⁸

John also possessed first-hand knowledge of apocalyptic visionaries, with the Spiritual Ubertino of Casale staying in Avignon under the protection of Cardinal Napoleone Orsini.¹⁸⁹ Ubertino was interrogated about Olivi there in 1317, since Olivi's influence had been evident in Ubertino's *Arbor vitae* (1305), which he claimed to have written 'without thinking' ('sine cogitatione') under direct inspiration ('impulsu spiritus Iesu')—an inspiration which he insisted was also necessary for a proper understanding of his work—and since Ubertino used Olivi's Apocalypse commentary to help him identify popes Boniface VIII

philosophiques et littéraires (Paris, 2013), pp. 199–200. On Marguerite's criticism of learning, see S. Field, *The Beguine, the Angel, and the Inquisitor: The Trials of Marguerite Porete and Guiard of Cressonessart* (Notre Dame, IN, 2012), pp. 142–3. For the effects of these 1310 trials on ecclesiastical attitudes in Avignon, as well as their fame across Europe, including Arnald of Villanova's knowledge of them in southern France, see Field, *Beguine*, pp. 177–204.

¹⁸⁶ The advisory theologian Francesco Silvestri, Bishop of Florence, highlighted these ideas in his report: Vatican City, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, MS Arm. xxxi 42, fols 84v, 87v. Cf. the report of another adviser, Bonagratia of Bergamo, who emphasized that the apostles had 'vera et plena intelligentia litteralis et mystica' and that no one, not even St Francis, had greater knowledge than they: *Allegationes super articulis*, Paris, BnF, MS lat. 4190, fol. 48r. On Bonagratia's authorship of this work, see S. Piron, 'Bonagrazia de Bergame, auteur des *Allegationes* sur les articles extraits par Jean XXII de la *Lectura super Apocalipsim* d'Olivi', in A. Cacciotti and P. Sella (eds), *Revirescunt chartae codices documenta textus*, ii (Rome, 2002), pp. 1065–87. For more on these theological reports, see Burr, *Peaceable*, ch. 10.

¹⁸⁷ In a sermon c.1325, ed. E. Pásztor, in 'Le Polemiche sulla "Lectura super Apocalipsim" di Pietro Giovanni Olivi fino alla sua condanna', *Bullettino dell'istituto storico italiano per il medio evo*, 70 (1958), p. 418. For John's interpretation of Olivi, see P. Nold, 'New Annotations of Pope John XXII and the Process against Peter John Olivi's *Lectura super Apocalipsim*', *Oliviana*, 4 (2012), <http://oliviana.revues.org/521>, sect. 62–4. John's arguments about the beatific vision can, therefore, be seen in light of Olivi as well.

¹⁸⁸ MS Arm. xxxi 42, fol. 84v: 'toti statui sexto huius vite attribuit quod moysi et paulo transitorio ex privilegio est concessum'. Silvestri also called Olivi a 'pseudo propheta' using 'coniectura mentis': fol. 85v.

¹⁸⁹ Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans*, pp. 261–2.

and Benedict XI as mystical Antichrists.¹⁹⁰ Olivi's promotion of visionary insights also coincided with Spirituals' actual connections to mystics, rendering visionary experiences even more suspect. Not only did Ubertino himself have contact with lay female visionaries such as Angela of Foligno and Clare of Montefalco, but the translation of Olivi's works into the vernacular helped make groups of lay people in southern France known as 'beguins' an apparent danger, especially in the eyes of inquisitors like the Dominican Bernard Gui.¹⁹¹

All these confluences helped reinforce a growing distrust in well-placed theological circles for prophecies and private revelations during the first two decades of the fourteenth century. John XXII's examination and condemnation of Olivi's theories of progressive enlightenment was part of this suspicion (a process drawn out over nearly ten years, from c.1317 to 1326),¹⁹² and even astrological speculation came under greater attack.¹⁹³ Another theologian John consulted about Olivi, the Augustinian friar Augustinus of Ancona (c.1243–1328), who taught and lectured in Paris and Padua, among other places, embodied the larger theological misgivings about both apocalypticism and visionaries.¹⁹⁴ In particular, in 1310, even before the Olivi commission, Augustinus explicitly attacked Arnald of Villanova and Olivi, turning the tables on progressive enlightenment by arguing instead that, since the Gospel truth had been fully revealed, there was no further need for *any* miracles, visions, or prophecies.¹⁹⁵ In the early Church (*ecclesia primitiva*), all

¹⁹⁰ *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu* (Venice, 1485; repr. Turin, 1961), p. 6a. See also Burr, *Persecution*, p. 85, and *Peaceable*, p. 199 n. 9. Ubertino and Olivi had taught together in Florence, 1287–9. On Ubertino's time in Florence and Avignon, see Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans*, pp. 47ff., 96ff., 182.

¹⁹¹ The term 'beguin' was applied to lay Franciscans and followers of Olivi (both male and female) in southern France: L. Burnham, *So Great a Light, So Great a Smoke: The Beguin Heretics of Languedoc* (Ithaca, NY, 2008), p. 2. The decree *Cum de quibusdam mulieribus* by Pope Clement V, promulgated by John XXII in 1317, emphasized the dangers of such groups: *Corpus iuris canonici*, ed. E. Friedberg, ii (Leipzig, 1879–91), col. 1169. For discussion of this decree, see E. Makowski, 'A Pernicious Sort of Woman': *Quasi-Religious Women and Canon Lawyers in the Later Middle Ages* (Washington, DC, 2005), pp. 23ff. For Ubertino and visionaries, see Burr, *Peaceable*, p. 124. For Olivi's influence on beguins, see Burr, *Persecution*, pp. 73–4. For Gui's discovery in the 1320s of connections between Olivi's writings and beguins, see his *Le livre des sentences*, ed. A. Pales-Gobilliard, ii (Paris, 2002), pp. 1298ff., and *Manuel de l'inquisiteur*, ed. G. Mollat, i (Paris, 1926; repr. 2006), pp. 108ff.

¹⁹² Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans*, pp. 207, 232.

¹⁹³ A. Boureau, *Satan the Heretic*, trans. T. Fagan (Chicago, 2006), pp. 11, 20–1, 47.

¹⁹⁴ Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans*, p. 156. For Augustinus' career, see P. B. Ministeri, 'De vita et operibus Augustini de Ancona, O.E.S.A.', *Analecta Augustiniana*, 22 (1951–2), pp. 48–56.

¹⁹⁵ *Tractatus contra divinatores et sompniatores*, ed. P. Giglioni, *Analecta Augustiniana*, 48 (1985), pp. 59, 74, and 62–3: 'nunc, quod veritas Evangelii est plene revelata et declarata et

those gifts Paul named in 1 Corinthians were necessary, but now, such experiences were likely to be of demonic origin; even if they helped confirm the faith, people needed to remember that God could permit such work 'through evil spirits'.¹⁹⁶ By 1320, Augustinus had concluded that, since prophetic ability belonged to the intellect (*intellectus*) or understanding, not to the affect (*affectus*) or will, gifts of prophecy or visions had nothing to do with the charity of a saint; no one should be canonized based on such experiences.¹⁹⁷ Thus, Augustinus extended Aquinas's thought and thoroughly rejected the notion of prophetic *habitus* as part of a holy life. With the support of John XXII—and Cardinal Albertini—at Avignon, therefore, extraordinary revelations of all sorts increasingly came under suspicion.

VI. CONCLUSION

Nicholas Trevet's treatment of prophecy in his commentaries was part of a much wider trend in the assessment of divine inspiration at the beginning of the fourteenth century. With controversial questions raging about predictions of the Antichrist or the new age of the Spirit, Trevet deliberately turned his conception of prophecy away from these concerns. The ambiguous nature of Boethius' inspiration gave Trevet scope to reassess the relationship between philosophy, theology, prophecy, and poetry. As Trevet brought these disciplines closer together, as the prophet David came to look more like Boethius and vice versa, intellectual endeavours took on an air of contemplation and inspiration, while prophecy grew tamer, more studious, more concerned with ethical and prudential behaviour. In Trevet's hands, transposed from external history into interior language and understanding, prophecy became more cultured, moral, musical, and almost poetic.

Trevet's efforts to tame the idea of prophecy fitted well with developments at Avignon, a new and weighty centre of intellectual life in Europe where, in Vauchez's words, '*studium* came closest to *sanctitas*'.¹⁹⁸ What I have emphasized here is the urgency with which the relationship of learning to inspiration had to be addressed at the beginning of the

fides catholica plene confirmata, videmus expresse quia Deus destitit ab operatione miraculorum; ergo sic debemus arguere quod destiterit a revelationes sompniorum et visionum'.

¹⁹⁶ *Contra divinatores*, pp. 60–3: 'per malos spiritus'.

¹⁹⁷ *Summa de potestate ecclesiastica* (Rome, 1582), q15.a5, p. 103: Augustinus asks, 'Utrum papa debeat aliquem canonizare in sanctum propter donum prophetiae'.

¹⁹⁸ A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. J. Birrell (New York, 1997), p. 404.

fourteenth century. The merging of prophecy, poetry, and philosophy and the bridging of Dominican and humanist views on inspired writing went beyond the individual efforts of a theologian like Trevet, and were in fact encouraged by the intellectual and cultural milieu of the papacy at Avignon. As a result, in opposition to rapturous mystical inspiration, inspiration of a more ordinary sort was reconnected to holiness. Intellectual life and sanctity converged, a process best exemplified for Vauchez in the canonizations of Louis of Anjou ('the first intellectual to be canonized by the medieval Church') in 1317 and then Thomas Aquinas—whose cause Nicholas Albertini of Prato helped to promote—in 1323, the same year John XXII firmly rejected Franciscan claims of evangelical poverty as an ideal.¹⁹⁹ What looked like innate natural talent (*ingenium*) was reconsidered and judged to be a divine gift (*donum divinum*).²⁰⁰ In this respect, Dominicans such as Trevet, in their reassessments of prophecy and their promotion—via 'intellectual' prophecy—of prudential guidance, were natural allies of the 'humanist tendencies' which Vauchez identifies in the early Avignon papacy.²⁰¹ These tendencies were in opposition to what the papacy saw in the spirituality of the mystic, which seemed anti-*studium* and dangerous.²⁰² Spiritual gifts became visible not through extraordinary visions or miracles but through great understanding and good works. The intellectual prophet, and sometimes saint, emerged as a parallel to the mystics, whose spirituality nonetheless continued to flourish, especially when detached from the apocalyptic concerns of the Spirituels. Dominicans and early humanists were thus potential partners in transforming prophecy—and its role as a channel for divine insight—into something less mystical and more philosophical, more cultured, and more prudent.

¹⁹⁹ *Sainthood*, pp. 394, 402–3; Ghisalberti, ed., *Dizionario*, 'Albertini, Niccolò', p. 735. John rejected the claims in his bull *Cum inter nonnullos*. Louis of Anjou was the only Franciscan canonized by John, who had been one of Louis's advisers before becoming pope and who downplayed Louis's possible connections to Olivi: M. Brunner, 'Poverty and Charity: Pope John XXII and the Canonization of Louis of Anjou', *Franciscan Studies*, 69 (2011), pp. 231–56.

²⁰⁰ *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae sancti Ludovici O.F.M. episcopi Tolosani, Analecta Franciscana*, 7 (Quaracchi, 1951), p. 60: 'magis videbatur divini doni infusio quam humani ingenii et studii exquisicio'.

²⁰¹ *Sainthood*, p. 407. Interestingly, Arnald of Villanova accused Dominicans who refused to look for deeper eschatological signs in Scripture of making Christ into a poet (*poeta*) and Aquinas into an evangelist (*evangelista*): *Apologia*, extract in Ehrle, 'Arnaldo', p. 499.

²⁰² Vauchez notes how Avignon canonizations (especially under John XXII) excluded numerous lay people, mystics, and those with prophetic charisms, including the rejection of the lay Franciscan Margaret of Cortona's case, and the indefinite postponement of Clare of Montefalco's: *Saints*, pp. 211–13.

6

Albertino Mussato and Humanist Prophecy

Towards the end of the thirteenth century in northern Italy, small groups of educated laymen developed a new attitude towards classical poetry. Traditional methods of teaching grammar had long involved the imitation of ancient exemplars, but these early humanists began to adhere in their poetry much more closely to classical models. Unlike in France, then the leader in intellectual and cultural life, northern Italy's grammatical education in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries had focused less on the study of ancient authors than on the mastery of the medieval epistolary style known as the *ars dictaminis*.¹ Ronald Witt points out that it was precisely because Italians had neither a long tradition of vernacular poetry nor great knowledge of the classical poets that they could turn to the ancients with such fervour, as to a new discovery.² As Robert Black notes about the entire movement in northern Italy, 'this classical taste, implying the absolute superiority of ancient models of both grammar and rhetoric, was unprecedented in the Middle Ages'.³

Lovato dei Lovati (c.1240–1309) was central to the development of this movement in Padua in the 1260s, exalting Latin as the vehicle for poetic composition, and gathering around himself a circle of students and

¹ R. Witt, 'Medieval Italian Culture and the Origins of Humanism as a Stylistic Ideal', in A. Rabil (ed.), *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, i (Philadelphia, PA, 1988), pp. 42–3.

² Witt, 'Medieval Italian Culture', pp. 52–3. Italian vernacular poetry, inspired by Provençal writings, had become a vibrant movement even before Dante's extraordinary accomplishments. It may have been the development of this rival language that encouraged proponents of classical poetry to intensify their efforts: R. Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden, 2000), p. 102.

³ R. Black, 'Humanism', in C. Allmand (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vii: c. 1415–1500 (Cambridge, 1998), p. 253. Humanist classicism certainly contrasted with the most popular contemporary works of poetic theory, e.g. Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *Poetria nova*, which quoted no classical authors: R. Black, 'The Origins of Humanism', in A. Mazzocco (ed.), *Interpretations of Renaissance Humanism* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 48–9. It also contrasted with the thirteenth-century vogue for logic and 'speculative grammar' that had pervaded the schools: Witt, *Footsteps*, p. 79.

admirers now classified as some of the earliest 'humanists'.⁴ The Paduans' poetic writings, primarily in epistolary form, were largely 'secular' in outlook, in the sense that their content showed few overtly Christian concerns. Stylistic imitation and classical enthusiasm would eventually permeate other literary genres (such as public rhetoric) and effect larger cultural changes,⁵ but the Paduan movement first fashioned its identity in poetic terms, and it was on these terms that it encountered those who would seek to criticize and challenge it.

As a grammatical revival and thus a potential new force in education, humanist attitudes were bound to create tension. The most common understanding of poetry among educational theorists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was that it was part of *grammatica* and therefore propaedeutic, preparing students for the loftier heights of philosophy or theology. Poetry, along with history, provided grammatical and rhetorical foundations, and, at its best, played an important ethical role by providing *exempla* of good and bad behaviour.⁶ Grammar, said Hugh of St Victor, was 'an instrument in the service of philosophy',⁷ but poetry's inability to say things clearly meant it could be no more than preparatory. Thomas Aquinas concurred.⁸

The first important public defender of the Paduans' elevation of poetry was Albertino Mussato (1261–1329). Among Lovato's students and admirers, Mussato emerged as the most celebrated member of that next generation.⁹ Born the illegitimate son of a Paduan noble, he became a notary highly involved in northern Italian politics, acting as both Paduan ambassador to Florence and later Executor of Justice in the latter.¹⁰ Mussato's career was evidence of the growing significance of an urban, educated class of laity whose intellectual interests were not defined by ecclesiastical concerns.¹¹ Out of this low-born class, which consisted

⁴ For more on Lovato and other members of his Paduan 'cenacolo', see Witt, *Footsteps*, pp. 81–116; and Guido Billanovich, 'Il preumanesimo padovano', in *Storia della cultura veneta*, ii: *Il Trecento* (Vicenza, 1976), pp. 19–110.

⁵ Witt, *Footsteps*, pp. 6, 93.

⁶ M. S. Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400–1500* (Manchester, 2011), pp. 124–5.

⁷ *Didascalicon de studio legendi*, ed. T. Offergeld (Freiburg, 1997) II.28, p. 206; trans. p. 80: 'instrumentum ad philosophiam'.

⁸ *In Boetii De trinitate*, in *Opusc. theo.*, ii, 5.1.

⁹ Succeeding generations of humanists pointed to Mussato's significance: Petrarch praised his histories, while Coluccio Salutati called him 'the first cultivator of eloquence' ('primus eloquentie cultor'): *Epistolario*, ed. F. Novati, iii (Rome, 1896), Ep. 9, p. 84. See M. T. Dazzi, *Il Mussato preumanista* (Vicenza, 1964), pp. 53–4.

¹⁰ For a detailed biography, see Giuseppe Billanovich, 'Tra Dante e Petrarca', in *Dal Medioevo all'umanesimo* (Milan, 2001), pp. 100–15.

¹¹ E. Coccia and S. Piron, 'Poésie, sciences et politique: Une génération d'intellectuels italiens (1290–1330)', *Revue de Synthèse*, 129 (2008), p. 559.

largely of notaries and lawyers, all the major figures of Paduan humanism from 1260 to 1350 emerged, motivated to promote, against the aristocracy as well as the clergy, a 'mental nobility'.¹² The grammatical revival was thus tied to larger social developments. Relative to the rest of Europe, the laity in northern Italy gained greater access to jobs in official chanceries, bringing increased lay interest to the training in grammar and rhetoric that was necessary for legal studies.¹³ Lay notaries, in turn, taught both rhetoric and grammar throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.¹⁴ The subjects were often taught by the same person, so that, as Nancy Siraisi remarks, they 'tended to merge'.¹⁵ In addition, by the mid-thirteenth century, courses in ancient literature appear to have been offered in Padua.¹⁶ Mussato's education at the Padua *studium* as part of his legal training thus laid the foundation for his success as a classicizing writer as well.¹⁷

Mussato's accomplishments as a writer highlighted the new standing which poetry—and, by extension, history—was gaining in the schools and cultural life of northern Italy. In December 1315, with the *studium*'s Arts Faculty promoting his work, Mussato was crowned poet laureate of Padua for his tragedy *Ecerinis*—the first Senecan tragedy written in classical idiom in a millennium—and for his history, *De gestis Henrici VII Cesaris*.¹⁸ He was the first poet thus lauded since Statius stood on the Capitoline Hill in first-century Rome.¹⁹ Mussato became the standard-bearer for eloquent,

¹² A. Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1978), p. 280. See also Black, 'Origins of Humanism', pp. 39, 53–5, who considers Lovato's rejection of vernacular literature to be part of this anti-aristocratic feeling.

¹³ Witt, 'Medieval Italian Culture', p. 38.

¹⁴ Witt, *Footsteps*, pp. 90–1.

¹⁵ N. Siraisi, *Arts and Sciences at Padua: The Studium of Padua Before 1350* (Toronto, 1973), p. 33.

¹⁶ Witt, *Footsteps*, p. 89.

¹⁷ Mussato may even have taught there: Witt, *Footsteps*, p. 119. The term 'studium' in this context meant a 'centre of higher learning sufficiently renowned to attract scholars from elsewhere': Siraisi, *Arts*, p. 16.

¹⁸ The *Ecerinis* describes the reign of the thirteenth-century Paduan tyrant Ezzelino da Romano. Quentin Skinner points out that, in addition to its literary significance, the *Ecerinis* had a political message of opposition to aristocratic tyrants, a message the city recognized and wanted to promote, ordering the play to be read every year: Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, i (Cambridge, 1978), p. 39. This explains as well Smalley's observation that the guild of notaries wanted Mussato to write another version of it in simpler Latin so more Paduans could understand it: B. Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1960), p. 283.

¹⁹ For Padua as a city interested in publicly promoting its classical past, see C. Benes, *Urban Legends: Civic Identity and the Classical Past in Northern Italy, 1250–1350* (University Park, PA, 2011), pp. 39–60. The significance of the ancient laureation (and its revival) in the Italian cultural imagination is clear from Dante's reference to it in *Purgatorio*, ed. R. Hollander (New York, 2004), 21.88–90. Dante refused the crown in real life, when,

classicizing writing and was the first to articulate a theory for the new style in the face of two detractors in particular, Giovanni of Vigonza, a Venetian grammarian, and Giovannino of Mantua, a Dominican friar and lecturer at the order's Padua priory.

Mussato's defences, both of his own classical imitation and of the lasting significance of poetry itself, have been the focus of several studies, which have placed him at the beginning of a series of defences of poetry by Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Salutati. These defences promoted—against the encroachments of scholasticism and its methods—‘poetic theology’, that is, poetry as the true queen of the sciences and true vessel of sacred wisdom.²⁰ As an Italian layman supporting theological poetry in the face of Dominican criticism, Mussato's defence does have much in common with the later ones.²¹ Mussato's case, however, needs to be isolated and put back in its original context, as the first instance of this debate, so that he can be considered in relation to theories of prophetic inspiration which preceded him. Mussato must also be placed more firmly alongside his contemporary, Nicholas Trevet, since his points of contact with Trevet provide for helpful comparison in exploring what first prompted a ‘humanist’ defence of poetry.²²

The close parallels between Mussato and Trevet strongly suggest that, underlying the emergence of poetic theology is the issue of inspiration in the present age, which scholars have not previously stressed. Alastair Minnis's work has shown how humanist approaches to poetry draw from principles of scholastic exegesis, and he posits in particular the convergence of a scholastic exegetical focus on Scripture's literal sense and on authorial intention with allegorized readings of pagan poets.²³ But,

inspired by the Paduan coronation of Mussato, the Bolognese poet and professor Giovanni del Virgilio offered it to him; Dante desired it instead from Florence (and longed for it openly in *Paradiso* 25.1–12). See also Coccia and Piron, ‘Poésie’, p. 574.

²⁰ Billanovich posits a direct line from Mussato to Petrarch's statements on poetic theology in his *Rerum familiarum libri* X.4, written in Padua in 1349: ‘Preumanesimo’, p. 75. For the text, see *Le familiari*, ed. V. Rossi and U. Bosco, ii (Florence, 2008) X.4. Significant studies of Mussato's relationship to later defences include E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W. Trask (Princeton, NJ, 1990), pp. 214–21; G. Vinay, ‘Studi sul Mussato’, *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 126 (1949), pp. 113–59; G. Ronconi, *Le origini delle dispute umanistiche sulla poesia* (Rome, 1976); and C. C. Greenfield, *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics, 1250–1500* (Lewissburg, PA, 1981), pp. 79–94.

²¹ Petrarch inveighed against scholastic theories of poetry proposed by a *medicus*, while Salutati faced Dominican reproach.

²² My intention is not, however, to isolate Mussato's defence as a traditional medieval one and Petrarch's as a new Renaissance one, which Curtius (*European Literature*, p. 220), for instance, does. I argue below why this is not the case.

²³ A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship* (Philadelphia, PA, 2010), *passim*.

more was necessary for the sorts of arguments Mussato made, since they were not based solely on allegory. They relied also on concepts directly connected to considerations of the broad stream of Sixth Age prophecy, considerations which spilled over from scholastic writings into more widely accessible works. It was through prophetic inspiration that medieval thinkers from clerical academics and preachers to lay intellectuals claimed sacred authority, because they considered that inspiration still viable. This matters because Mussato did not simply want to read pagan poets like Scripture; he wanted his *own* work to have contemporary sacred authority.²⁴ Thus, Italian humanists needed to wrest prophecy from the hands of theologians in order to give their assertions true weight, a process made easier by the development of theological attitudes visible in the Avignon papacy's rejection of strains of rapturous or visionary inspiration in favour of more ordinary intellectual endeavour or *studium*. In short, as scholastic prophecy broadened and drew closer to philosophical insight, wisdom, and ethical guidance, humanist poetic prophecy could rise to meet it.

Mussato's defence highlights the claims of a new group for cultural and spiritual authority. Lay humanists were beginning to assert their own special role as creators and interpreters of sacred texts, as true *vates*.²⁵ The appropriation of the prophetic mantle from scholastic theologians led to a long-term struggle that played out in battles, not just over academic turf and methodology, but also over the nature of inspiration and the boundaries of sacred texts.²⁶ This chapter shows how Mussato's vision of poetry emerged in particular from a reading of Boethius, Senecan tragedy, and the Psalms, which resembled Trevet's in many significant ways. At the same time, Mussato's distinctive claims about the nature of sacred texts and the musicality of poetry ultimately indicate his creation of a new role for the *vates*.

²⁴ Minnis has pointed out that Italy was ahead of other European regions in developing a tradition of commentary on contemporary authors like Dante: Minnis, *Authorship*, p. 165. Mussato initiated the elevation of poetic prophecy before that tradition fully developed (although Dante's first attempts at 'self-commentary' were essentially contemporaneous: see *MLTC*, pp. 373ff.).

²⁵ Denys Hay claims that the only difference between earlier arguments for ancient poetry and those of Italian humanists is that lay people make the latter: D. Hay, 'Scholarship, Religion and the Church', in K. Robbins (ed.), *Religion and Humanism* (Oxford, 1981), p. 10. I argue instead that Mussato's theory of prophecy goes beyond his predecessors, reflecting shifts in theories of sacred inspiration during the thirteenth century.

²⁶ Erika Rummel's *Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Cambridge, MA, 1995) documents the sixteenth-century phase of this conflict, when it had become far more widespread.

I. ORIGINS OF THE DEFENCE

In December 1315, the same month as Mussato's coronation, the Dominican friar Giovannino of Mantua delivered a sermon upholding theology as the premier science, and denouncing the pretensions of other disciplines to wisdom. What precisely motivated Giovannino is not fully clear. He had been in Padua since at least 1297,²⁷ so he must have been familiar with the promotion of grammatical arts at the Paduan *studium*. He did not, however, specifically mention poetry in his homily, and Mussato eagerly pointed out this omission in a letter (now lost) to the friar, implying that Giovannino had excluded poetry because of its superior standing among the arts.²⁸ The Dominican accordingly responded at some point in 1316 with a rebuke directed solely at poetry and against the claims that Mussato had made for poetry's exalted status. Giovannino quotes not only from the lost epistle, but also from an earlier letter Mussato wrote to the grammarian Giovanni of Vigonza, in response to the latter's criticism of a priapic poem of Mussato's.²⁹ While the grammarian had complained of the immorality of one particular poem, the Dominican gave a more thoroughgoing critique. Mussato in turn replied to Giovannino with what proved to be his fullest articulation of poetry's value.³⁰

The gravity of the epistolary exchange between Mussato and the Dominican is not entirely clear, especially in light of some of the more radical claims Mussato makes. Did the antagonists recognize a serious clash of ideas, or was the debate merely an enjoyable way for men of letters to pass the time?³¹

²⁷ P. Marangon, *Ad cognitionem scientiae festinare: Gli studi nell' Università e nei conventi di Padova nei secoli XIII e XIV*, ed. T. Pesenti (Trieste, 1997), p. 378.

²⁸ The incident is summarized in the anonymous *Evidentia harum epistolarum*, written at the time and printed in *HR*, fasc. 7, p. 69. The *Evidentia* may be the work of two professors of grammar at the *studium*, Castellano of Bassano and Guizzardo of Bologna: Billanovich, 'Preumanesimo', pp. 72–3.

²⁹ The letter to Giovanni is Epistle 4 in 'Le Epistole Metriche del Mussato sulla Poesia', ed. E. Cecchini, in R. Cardini et al. (eds), *Tradizione classica e letteratura umanistica*, i (Rome, 1985), pp. 95–119. (Unless noted, all citations of Mussato's letters in this chapter come from this edition.) The arguments which the friar attributes to the humanist can also be found in Mussato's letter on the anniversary of his laureation (Ep. 1) and in another to the same grammarian (Ep. 7).

³⁰ Ep. 18. There is no scholarly consensus on the timing of these epistolary exchanges and surrounding events, with some placing the coronation a year earlier and the sermon a year after that. I have chosen the most accepted dates. Epistles 1, 4, and 7 seem to have been written between 1315 and 1316, while Giovannino's letter and Mussato's reply likely occurred during 1316. For discussions on the dating, see Witt, *Footsteps*, pp. 119, 157 n. 113; Billanovich, 'Preumanesimo', p. 71; and Siraisi, *Arts*, p. 47.

³¹ Curtius warns against calling Giovannino's letter an 'attack' on poetry, since he is merely trying to classify it: *European Literature*, p. 217. Billanovich sees certain aspects of levity in the exchange: 'Preumanesimo', p. 78.

Public debate was certainly a well-recognized element in Italian civic life,³² but the involvement of a Dominican seemed to raise the stakes since Dominicans had been in charge of heresy inquisitions in Padua since 1303. Several members of the humanist *cenacolo* had connections to inquisitors insofar as the latter made use of the secular branch of government, but Mussato had avoided such relations since the wife of his protector and patron had been accused of heresy in 1285.³³ The Franciscans, however, had controlled inquisitions at that time, and Mussato, in fact, was partly responsible for the transfer of inquisitorial power to the Dominicans when he went to Rome to accuse the Franciscans of abuses.³⁴ Mussato's relationship with Dominicans is still uncertain. Nonetheless, the type of statements Mussato made would probably not have been considered, in the end, dangerous: although he may not have adopted the well-established precaution of veiling his ideas within a larger poetic narrative, he still expressed them as a poet rather than as a theologian, and his alleged inspiration produced no explicit doctrinal claims.³⁵

At the same time, Mussato's status as a lay person challenging a theologian on the topic of sacred texts was a delicate area. During the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, members of the laity were increasingly making claims for inspiration via the *spiritus intelligentiae*.³⁶ Giovannino never explicitly addresses Mussato's status as a layman, focusing his arguments instead on the status of poetry. Yet, Mussato was using poetry to challenge a clerical monopoly on intellectual life. The debate nonetheless played out over a very specific area, namely over poets' claims to sacred knowledge, and over poetry's place within the liberal arts. Read in this context, it would seem that the exchange reflected real ideological differences between individuals fighting over the proper configuration of a *studium*'s curriculum, the contested site of teaching authority.

³² Black, 'Origins of Humanism', p. 51.

³³ Marangon, *Ad cognitionem*, pp. 73–5. Mussato's patron Viviano Musso (husband of the accused Armerina) was likely his godfather, and perhaps even his father: J. K. Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante* (Manchester, 1966), pp. 165–7.

³⁴ Marangon, *Ad cognitionem*, p. 75.

³⁵ Barbara Newman notes that 'poets, through much of the Middle Ages, had licence to proclaim with impunity ideas, however radical, that if voiced as formal theology could have provoked a swift, hostile response. Because of its unofficial status, mere literature might well be denounced . . . , but it was hardly worth the trouble of repressing': B. Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, PA, 2003), p. 65.

³⁶ For a discussion of the larger 'inner dynamic' of lay spirituality moving towards acquiring 'parts of the priestly sacred culture', see J. Van Engen, 'The Christian Middle Ages as an Historiographical Problem', *American Historical Review*, 91 (1986), p. 547. Arnald of Villanova and Guiard of Cressonessart, discussed in Ch. 5, are two examples of lay assertions of the *spiritus intelligentiae*.

There was no definitively assigned place for poetry within the medieval scheme of arts and sciences.³⁷ Despite *grammatica*'s traditional role as a preparatory step for the higher disciplines, the art of poetry itself retained a certain ambiguous status. In the twelfth century, for instance, John of Salisbury acknowledged that poetry contained elements of all the arts.³⁸ A mid-thirteenth-century 'Introduction to Philosophy' at the University of Paris, meanwhile, declared poetry to be a 'subalternated science' (*subalternata sciencia*) under three other sciences: grammar, in so far as it assisted understanding; rhetoric (*civilis sciencia*), in so far as it offered delight and moved someone to good works; and music, in so far as it dealt with underlying principles (*rationes*) and proportions of sounds and time.³⁹ Under the influence of Averroes' version of Aristotle's *Poetics*, furthermore, scholastic theory came to include poetry as part of logic.⁴⁰ For Giovannino, poetry's place was firmly among the arts of the *trivium*. Mussato, on the other hand, sought to take poetry from grammar and rhetoric and locate it above all the disciplines, in the place scholastics had recently been claiming for theology.

The form of Giovannino's tract of 1316 is itself bound up with his ideas. He writes in prose (*prosaice*), he says, rather than verse (*metrica*) since binding himself as a theologian to poetic rules would be harmful.⁴¹ It would distort the Holy Spirit's teachings to confine it to particular verbal structures, a claim Giovannino supports by citing Gregory the Great on Scripture's prerogatives to make its own grammatical rules.⁴² In other words, inspired utterances, the foundations of theology, have a content that gains nothing by being put into verse. Sacred Scripture, along with its prophets, is independent of poetry, which is an artificial imposition of language.⁴³ It follows then, for Giovannino, that theology (as the only divine science) ought not to constrict itself to poetic rules. The Dominican accordingly renders the rest of his letter in disputational form. Preparing to address Mussato's claim that poetry is an 'ars divina',

³⁷ For a survey of some of the principles underlying twelfth- and thirteenth-century classification schemes, see R. Copeland and I. Sluiter (eds), introduction in *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300–1475* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 1–12.

³⁸ *Metalogicon*, ed. J. B. Hall and K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Turnhout, 1991) I.24, p. 52: 'omnium artium . . . imago'.

³⁹ *Philosophica disciplina*, ed. C. Lafleur, in *Quatre introductions à la philosophie au XIIIe siècle* (Montreal, 1988), pp. 274, 277–8.

⁴⁰ *MLTC*, pp. 10–11.

⁴¹ *Epistola fratris Ioannini de Mantua Ordinis Praedicatorum*, ed. E. Garin, in *Il pensiero pedagogico dello umanesimo* (Florence, 1958), p. 2: 'ne doctor viderer sacrae theologiae iniuriam facere, me poeticis regulis obligando'.

⁴² See Gregory's *Moralia in Job*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 143–143b (Turnhout, 1979–85), Ep. ad Leandrum 5, p. 7: 'indignum vehementer existimo verba caelestis oraculi restringantur sub regulis Donati'.

⁴³ Cf. Aquinas on the metres of Scripture: Ch. 2, p. 71 n. 106.

Giovannino lists the justifications he sees for Mussato's poetic theory and offers objections to each in turn.⁴⁴

Giovannino's style was, in many ways, a novelty in Padua. Dominicans had been in the city for nearly a century, and by the 1270s, their house of studies seems to have been flourishing.⁴⁵ Parisian works made their way easily to Padua.⁴⁶ There was, however, no Faculty of Theology at the city's university until 1363,⁴⁷ so theological disputation would have had a place in Padua only within religious houses of study like the Dominican priory where Giovannino lectured on Scripture and Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, most likely through a Thomistic lens.⁴⁸ Mussato's reply to the Dominican, in contrast, came in verse form, and, while thorough, was not systematic, nor was it intended to be: its poetry was part of its argument, a rebuke to the claim that words governed by metre could not contain theological insight.

II. ARISTOTLE AND POETIC THEOLOGY

The first argument Giovannino cites from Mussato derives from a reading of Aristotle, namely, that poetry has from the beginning been called theology.⁴⁹ Mussato uses Aristotle to reclaim a lost honour bestowed upon poets in the pagan world, in words quoted by Giovannino: 'that art, formerly called theology, | was with its utterances the pipe and voice of the divine'.⁵⁰ By 'theology' Mussato means something different from the

⁴⁴ *Epistola fratris*, pp. 4–6.

⁴⁵ L. Gargan, *Lo studio teologico e la biblioteca dei Domenicani a Padova nel Tre e Quattrocento* (Padova, 1971), p. 8. Albert the Great in the 1230s and the future Benedict XI in 1270 both taught there: M. M. Mulchahey, 'First the Bow is Bent in Study—': *Dominican Education before 1350* (Toronto, 1998), p. 69; Marangon, *Ad cognitionem*, p. 376.

⁴⁶ A Franciscan inquisitor in Padua was making use of Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* in 1286: Marangon, *Ad cognitionem*, p. 379.

⁴⁷ Siraisi, *Arts*, pp. 134–5.

⁴⁸ Gargan, *Lo studio*, pp. 8, 11; M. M. Mulchahey, 'Education in Dante's Florence Revisited', in R. Begley and J. Koterski (eds), *Medieval Education* (New York, 2005), p. 155. Northern Italy had not experienced the strong dialectical movement which penetrated French education with the rise of scholasticism; a Ciceronian revival after 1250 joined with traditions of public debate to shape the models for exposition and argument in Italy: V. Cox, 'Ciceronian Rhetoric in Late Medieval Italy: The Latin and Vernacular Traditions', in V. Cox and J. O. Ward (eds), *The Rhetoric of Cicero in its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition* (Leiden, 2006), p. 115.

⁴⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ed. and trans. H. Tredennick (Cambridge, MA, 1956) I.2 (982b.18); and William of Moerbeke's translation, *Metaphysica*, ed. G. Vuillemin-Diem, *Aristoteles Latinus* 25/3, ii (Leiden, 1995) I.2, p. 16.

⁵⁰ *Epistola fratris*, p. 4: 'illa theologia quondam | Ars fuit eloquiis tibia voxque sacri'.

scholastic definition, which was rooted in the methods of logic and dialectic.⁵¹ For Mussato, theology is an intuitive understanding and expression of divine things. In defending himself to the grammarian Giovanni of Vigonza, he writes that poetry (*poesis*) consists of things to be contemplated (*contemplanda*) and is thus another theology (*altera theologia*).⁵² He adds that those who hate poetry have probably not read Aristotle (*Aristotelis volumen*), or they would know that poetry was also formerly another philosophy (*altera philosophia*).⁵³ Poetry, therefore, is both theology and philosophy, the summit of all arts and sciences.

Mussato could have encountered this *volumen* of Aristotle's, presumably the *Metaphysics*, during his time at the Padua *studium*, where public lectures in the subject took place, and where, significantly, the *Metaphysics* could be studied without theological oversight.⁵⁴ Indeed, Paduan centres of learning had made the city one of the strongholds of Aristotelian studies in the second half of the thirteenth century, just as Bishop Tempier was condemning radical Aristotelian natural philosophy in Paris.⁵⁵ Numerous philosophers and theologians who taught at Padua, whether in the Arts Faculty or in the houses of the religious orders, were particularly drawn to Aristotelian thought, including his natural science.⁵⁶ Mendicant sermons may have promulgated more widely the notion that Scripture should be confirmed by experience and by philosophy, but the arrival of the secular master Pietro d'Abano in 1306 from Paris had perhaps the greatest impact on humanist knowledge of Aristotelian science.⁵⁷

Pietro, trained in dialectic, astronomy, and medicine, fled Paris due to Dominican criticism of his position on the autonomy of philosophy from theology, and he taught in Padua—with the support of the humanist Lovato—from 1306 until his death in 1315, revising his works and

⁵¹ Cf. Ch. 4, pp. 117–18.

⁵² Ep. 7.21–2.

⁵³ Ep. 4.68–9.

⁵⁴ Coccia and Piron, 'Poésie', p. 556. The *Metaphysics* could have given Mussato all he needed for this first argument. Mussato most likely also knew the *Poetics*, and perhaps even the 1278 translation by Moerbeke. For more on this question, see H. A. Kelly, *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 117, who argues that Mussato was 'the only known user of Moerbeke's translation in the Middle Ages', utilizing it for minor citations of technical matters. Vinay claims a more general influence, but one harder to prove: 'Studi sul Mussato', pp. 135ff.

⁵⁵ Coccia and Piron, 'Poésie', p. 553; Marangon, *Alle origini dell'aristotelismo padovano* (sec. XII–XIII) (Padua, 1977), p. 13.

⁵⁶ Albert the Great, for instance, was followed by Witelo of Silesia, known for his naturalizing account of demons, as well as Augustinus of Ancona, who resisted recourse to miraculous explanations in his *De resurrectione mortuorum* of 1302: Marangon, *Ad cognitionem*, pp. 388–9. For Augustinus, see also Ch. 5, pp. 190–1.

⁵⁷ Marangon, *Ad cognitionem*, p. 389.

publishing his *Expositio Problematum Aristotelis* in 1310.⁵⁸ As a result certain aspects of Aristotle's philosophical approach came to be seen in Padua as a dangerous secularizing force. Paduan Franciscan sermons, for instance, register unease with the excessive influence of the Philosopher, and Pietro was again under investigation by Dominican inquisitors in the city at the time of his death.⁵⁹

Within the humanist *cenacolo*, however, Aristotle and Aristotelians were welcomed, and also influential. In the Arts Faculty at Padua there was a great deal of interaction among grammarians, rhetoricians, and those teaching subjects more directly influenced by the Aristotelian outlook in medicine and philosophy; in fact, all were institutionally united as one faculty.⁶⁰ The chronicler Rolandino of Padua (d. 1276) referred to *medici* and *physici* as 'auctoritates' in his *Cronica*; the professor of medicine Zambonino of Gazzo commented on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; and Geremia of Montagnone (d. c. 1320) wrote moral, juridical, and also medical treatises.⁶¹ Mussato himself had ties both to Pietro d'Abano and to Pietro's student, the controversial political theorist Marsilius of Padua, to whom Mussato dedicated his writings on Seneca and two epistles, and who himself returned to Padua from Paris around 1313.⁶² Knowledge of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* itself was also fairly pervasive within Padua's humanist circle: citations of it appear as *florilegia* in Geremia's *Compendium moralium notabilium* of c. 1300.⁶³ Mussato certainly has the *Metaphysics* in mind when he speaks of ancient people who expressed hidden mysteries in metre.⁶⁴ These are Aristotle's poet-theologians, or rather, they are Aquinas's (whose commentary Mussato was probably using), since it

⁵⁸ N. Siraisi, 'The *Expositio Problematum Aristotelis* of Peter of Abano', *Isis*, 61 (1970), pp. 321–2; Dazzi, *Mussato*, pp. 26–7.

⁵⁹ From a Paduan sermon collection Marangon cites numerous passages critical of Aristotle: *Alle origini*, p. 112–15. For Pietro's end, including his corpse's apparent exhumation and burning for heresy, see A. Murray, 'The Epicureans', in P. Boitani and A. Torti (eds), *Intellectuals and Writers in Fourteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 161–2.

⁶⁰ The full name was the Faculty of Arts and Medicine: Siraisi, *Arts*, p. 33. See also Marangon, *Ad cognitionem*, p. 385.

⁶¹ Marangon, *Ad cognitionem*, pp. 385–6.

⁶² P. O. Kristeller, 'Umanesimo e scolastica a Padova fino al Petrarca', in *Medioevo*, 11 (1985), pp. 15–16; Dazzi, *Mussato*, pp. 27, 29. Frank Godthardt describes Mussato as a 'longtime father-like friend' of Marsilius: F. Godthardt, 'The Life of Marsilius of Padua', in G. Moreno-Riaño and C. Nederman (eds), *A Companion to Marsilius of Padua* (Leiden, 2012), p. 45. Both Pietro and Marsilius emerged from the same class of notaries/lawyers as the Paduan humanists did: Hyde, *Padua*, pp. 163–4.

⁶³ Siraisi, *Arts*, p. 116.

⁶⁴ Ep. 7.17–8: 'Indeed poets poured out for the first people hidden mysteries | to be introduced only with composed metres' ('Tecta quidem prime fudere enigmata genti | non nisi compositis insinuanda metris').

was Aquinas who specified that Aristotle's theologizing 'myth-lovers' (*philomythes*) were poets.⁶⁵

Giovannino assumed Mussato's inspiration was the *Metaphysics*, and he countered accordingly, drawing explicitly upon Aquinas's commentary on the text. Poetry was, he admits, at first called theology because those early *vates*, among whom, as Aquinas noted, Orpheus held pride of place, were the first philosophers.⁶⁶ They happened to discuss the gods using metre, and so Aristotle called them 'primi theologizantes', but what they said about the divine was false (*falsa*) and invented (*ficta*).⁶⁷ They used mythological stories to speak about first principles, writing of Oceanus, for instance, when they wanted to speak of water. The poetic element was, essentially, a lie, and certainly extrinsic to any truth of the matter. Those early poet-theologians did have first principles, but they were purely natural ones, and so Giovannino calls them Epicureans (*sectae Epicureorum*)—they could not see past bodily things.⁶⁸ Aquinas had himself pointed out that the only cause those early philosophers recognized was the *material* one.⁶⁹ For Giovannino, this meant that their teachings were ultimately false; they could not be true theologians because they did not acknowledge spiritual reality.

The friar also rejected the truth value of poetic language in general. Giovannino states that Mussato claimed poetry treats divine things with lofty figurative representations (*sublimis figurae*) and words bearing mysteries (*mystica verba*).⁷⁰ For Giovannino, by contrast, poets' *figurae* treat

⁶⁵ Aquinas, *In Metaphysicam Aristotelis commentaria*, ed. M.-R. Cathala (Turin, 1935) I.4.83, p. 29: 'But those poets treated something on the nature of things with certain enigmas of fables' ('Isti autem poetae quibusdam aenigmatibus fabularum aliquod de rerum natura tractaverunt'). Moerbeke's *Metaphysics* translation reads, 'philomitos philosophus aliquid est; fabula namque ex miris constituitur': *Metaphysica* I.2, p. 16. In fact, Albert the Great identified Aristotle's myth-lovers as poets a few years before Aquinas did: see p. 209 n. 96. Augustine, of course, lambasted ancient 'mythical' theology in *De civ.* VI.5, but both Mussato and his interlocutor deal more immediately with Aquinas's and Aristotle's claims.

⁶⁶ *Epistola fratris*, p. 6: 'inter quos primatum tenuit Orpheus, fuerunt primi philosophantes'. Both Aquinas and Vincent of Beauvais knew from Isidore about poetic theologians (*poetae theologi*), including Orpheus, who helped humanity—recently emerged from barbarism—worship their gods by composing songs (*carmina*): Aquinas, *In Metaphysicam* I.4.82–3; Vincent, *Speculum maius* (Douai, 1624; repr. Graz, 1964–5) ii, III.110; Isidore, *Etymologiae*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911) VIII.7.1, 9. Cf. the earlier discussion of Humbert of Romans and Horace: Ch. 3, pp. 99–100.

⁶⁷ *Epistola fratris*, p. 6. Cf. Aquinas, *In Metaphysicam* I.4.83–4, p. 29, and I.3.63, p. 21: 'poetae... in multis... mentiuntur'.

⁶⁸ *Epistola fratris*, p. 6.

⁶⁹ *In Metaphysicam* I.4.92, p. 30. Aquinas cites Oceanus as an example of poetic theology's use of *fabularis similitudo* (I.4.83, p. 29). Cf. *In Metaphysicam* III.7.408, p. 138, where Aquinas says the Epicureans believed that the gods were in human form, for they could conceive of no separate substance existing unless it were in matter ('materialiter in sensibilibus').

⁷⁰ *Epistola fratris*, p. 4.

nothing more than created things, and poets therefore commit sacrilege (*sacrilegium*) by representing as divine what is material.⁷¹ This is the Thomistic argument elaborated in the *Summa Theologiae*: poetry has a deficiency of truth because it is a human science.⁷² It thus could not be, as Mussato had put it, 'a science sent down from highest heaven'.⁷³ *Fabulae* give a misleading picture of Creation: even if Ovid, for instance, spoke of a creation, he spoke of it 'out of chaos' ('de quodam chaos'), rather than 'out of nothing' ('de nihilo').⁷⁴ Giovannino is therefore unwilling to read pagan works as William of Conches or Nicholas Trevet had done, by appropriating the use of *fabulae* for philosophy. By Giovannino's time, the Neoplatonic method of reading Scripture had become increasingly suspect: the Condemnation of 1277, concerned about the undermining of Scripture's truth as *historia*, had rejected any link between *fabulae* and theological language.⁷⁵ Giovannino's critique of the poet-theologians accordingly follows both Aquinas and this more recent trend: the myths of those poets are false and do not rise above the material. They are neither metaphysical philosophy nor theology.

III. POETIC REVELATION

Mussato uses Aristotle, however, not only to justify making poetic knowledge all-encompassing, but also to supply himself with a historical justification for a universal revelation, diffused throughout all cultures and ages but accessible only to those particularly attuned to it. Surveying early human history, Mussato states that there was one people (*gens*) who believed in one god, while another group believed that the stars were gods.⁷⁶ Mussato here echoes the scholastic theory of Old Testament prophets as *maiores* who had explicit faith in Christ's redemption and were sent with the duty to teach this faith to the lesser ones (*minores*).⁷⁷

⁷¹ *Epistola fratris*, p. 6.

⁷² Aquinas saw in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* a refusal to grant poetry and its *fabulae* true philosophical validity: *In Metaphysicam* III.11.471. See also Ch. 4, pp. 131–2.

⁷³ Ep. 4.45: 'a summo demissa scientia celo'.

⁷⁴ *Epistola fratris*, p. 8. Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. R. J. Tarrant (Oxford, 2004) 1.7. Marangon sees in Giovannino's response a concern about philosophical promotion of the eternity of the world: *Alle origini*, p. 169.

⁷⁵ *Condamnation*, no. 152: 'Quod sermones theologi fundati sunt in fabulis'. Kempshall connects such suspicion to twelfth-century poets' claims to verisimilitude without plausible basis in history, resulting in uncertainty about truth in figurative language: *Rhetoric*, pp. 435–40. Rhetorical verisimilitude was also part of *historia*, a problem for Scripture which Augustine had already recognized: *Rhetoric*, pp. 377ff.

⁷⁶ Ep. 18.21–2.

⁷⁷ See Ch. 2, p. 85.

The theologians acknowledged that the *maiores* before Christ often used figurative language to protect their truths. Nonetheless, Aquinas, for instance, made an important distinction: although certain pagans (such as the Sibyl) might have been granted revelations about Christ, they could never be considered *maiores*, regardless of their wisdom, because they were not sent as teachers or prophets for people to believe in.⁷⁸ They were not part of sacred or prophetic history.

But, in Mussato's version of history, the group of ancient *maiores* is not limited to Jews and the gentile Job; it extends, rather, to all monotheists and those with prophetic insight. Mussato equates this special insight with his own faith (*nostra fides*), which is 'provida', foreseeing—it has always been anticipating, always prophesying.⁷⁹ Other members of this faith included Homer and Vergil.⁸⁰ Beginning with Aristotle's poet-theologians, this core of true-believers wished (in accord with Horace's famous formulation) to be either useful or pleasing (*prodesse seu delectare*),⁸¹ so, when they used names such as 'Jupiter' and 'Juno', they could both delight readers with *figurae* and also hand on divine truths of Nature, while keeping them hidden from all but the most diligent enquirers.⁸² Thus, Mussato's vatic poets were not just theologians or philosophers, not just people who reflected on revealed truths; they were also the means of preserving and transmitting that revelation.

Mussato argues that these poet-theologians also had foreknowledge of Christian history, but he makes his case in a way that undermines that history. He says, first of all, that divine revelation had inspired the ancients, so that, as a result, their verses could reveal secrets when placed in the proper order. Through ancient poetry the entire Christian faith (*tota fides christiana*) had been revealed, as Proba's *cento*, derived from rearranged verses of Vergil, proved: 'Our faith was predicted by holy Vergil; | consider the metres famous through Proba's *cento*'.⁸³ This belief in the hidden meanings of *centones* (poems composed as a patchwork of others' verses) and of pagan myth was not unusual at the time.⁸⁴ The rest of

⁷⁸ *De veritate* 14.a11.ad5: 'gentiles non ponebantur ut instructiores divinae fidei'. For Aquinas, pagans only needed *implicit* faith in a redeemer god to be saved: *Super Sent. III* d25.q2.a2.qc2.sol2.ad3.

⁷⁹ Ep. 18.27.

⁸⁰ Ep. 18.28–9.

⁸¹ Ep. 18.51–3. Cf. Horace, *Ars poetica*, ed. E. C. Wickham and H. W. Garrod, in *Opera*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1901), l. 333.

⁸² Ep. 18.30–4, 54–5. Cf. Macrobius, *Commentarius in Somnium Scipionis*, ed. J. Willis (Leipzig, 1970) I.2.17, and Augustine, *De doct.* II.6.7.

⁸³ Quoted by Giovannino, *Epistola fratris*, p. 6: 'Nostra fides sancto tota est praedicta Maroni, | Incluta centone despice metra Probe'. Cf. Ep. 18.168–9.

⁸⁴ For medieval belief in and use of Vergil as prophet, see Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, ii/2 (Paris, 1959), pp. 233–62. For the influence of Proba, a fourth-century Roman, see R. P. H. Green, 'Proba's Cento: Its Date, Purpose, and Reception', *Classical Quarterly*, 45 (1995), pp. 551–63.

Mussato's description of *fabula*, however, appears to go beyond the traditional understanding and to actually subvert the historicity of Christian teaching. Scripture's modes are the modes of poetry, Mussato says, yet he draws conclusions different from those of theologians who acknowledged this similarity.⁸⁵ Responding to Giovannino's attacks on the use of mythological figures such as Oceanus, Mussato notes that pagan discussion of water as a deity is, in fact, no different from claiming that God is found in the waters of the baptismal font. In other words, all theological language uses the same sort of *fabula*, and as such, Christian doctrine can be equated with myth. It is the same with biblical history; for instance, what Genesis says openly ('planis . . . verbis'), poetry teaches using greater mystery ('nigmate [*sic*] maiori mistica musa docet').⁸⁶ The linguistic obscurity cited as a reason to keep poetry propaedeutic becomes, for Mussato, the reason to elevate it. While the Bible speaks of the tower of Babel, pagan poetry tells of giants storming the heavens; Jove's punishment of Lycaon is the same as God's expulsion of Lucifer: 'he who is God for us was Jupiter'.⁸⁷ Such comparative and euhemeristic methods had been used in early Christian apologetics, but usually to prove that Christians had got the story correct or that the pagans had learned from Jews or Christians.⁸⁸ This is not Mussato's goal. By his time, the need for anti-pagan apologetics was gone, and his statements actually suggest an interpretation of these comparisons that elevates mythology at least to Scripture's level of truth and authority, if not higher.

Poets had long been viewed as transformers of *historia*, reworking it as if they were prophets interpreting and covering events with figurative language, while also mixing *res gestae* with *fabulae*. For exegetes, though,

⁸⁵ Ep. 7.37–43. The theologian Alexander of Hales, for instance, acknowledged this: 'Holy Scripture is handed down in a highly artful way after the mode of poetry' ('Sacra Scriptura valde artificialiter secundum modum poeticum tradatur'), *Summa theologiae*, Intro.q1.4.a1.ad1.1; trans., *MLTC*, pp. 213–14. For Alexander, the 'artificial' mode was the verbal obscurity required for people's weak intellects to approach the divine. Aquinas made much sharper distinctions between poetic and theological obscurity: Ch. 4, pp. 131–2.

⁸⁶ Ep. 4.47–8. Witt translates 'planis . . . verbis' as 'prose' (R. Witt: 'Coluccio Salutati and the Conception of the *Poeta Theologus* in the Fourteenth Century', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 30 (1977), p. 541), but medieval usage suggests that Mussato is likely making an exegetical point, contrasting literal and spiritual senses: Bonaventure, for instance, writes that Scripture works partly 'per plana verba', partly 'per mystica', *Breviloquium*, prol., p. 4.

⁸⁷ Ep. 4.49–56: 'qui nobis Deus est, Iupiter ille fuit'.

⁸⁸ This comparative practice had great importance during the patristic period, e.g. in Eusebius and Cassiodorus: J. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History* (Baltimore, MD, 1998), pp. 141–8, 164–5. The ninth-century *Eclogue* of Theodulus, a widely-read school text in Mussato's time, contrasts false pagan stories with the true, Christian versions: Garin, *Il pensiero*, p. 92. Theodulus sets up the connection between Babel and the giants, though he does not make Lucifer a second Lycaon: *Ecloga*, ed. F. M. Casaretto (Florence, 1997), ll. 61–8, 85–92.

Ezra's reordering of the Psalms did not make them more fictive but, rather, more profound and more effective. Mussato here implies something very similar, rejecting the idea that poetic or 'artificial' transformations are contaminated with lies. He wants to point out the continuities between pagan and Christian narrative, yet he does not identify historical truth with Scripture and the adulterated version with myth, or contrast sacred clarity with secular or pagan shadows. Rather, if the biblical story expresses the plain literal sense, mythical poetry has that same story's depth of mystery (and its concomitant delight). Scripture, in short, is not a special revelation.

Mussato's argument implies a rejection of Scripture's unique grounding in both historical and natural symbolism, as the basis of sacred history and the sacraments.⁸⁹ Equating descriptions of baptism with Ovid's mythical language undermines any distinctive sacred boundaries or channels of grace. The sacred is brought down while poetry rises to meet it.⁹⁰ This convergence is an outgrowth of the broad conceptions of divine inspiration which were developing in various areas of medieval intellectual culture over the course of the previous two centuries. Once inspiration could be found in numerous activities, once it looked like the natural understanding of philosophers or preachers, that inspiration was no longer so special.⁹¹ Mussato takes advantage of that tradition of thought and at the same time reasserts the presence of a special inspiration, but in new terms, elevating the secular to the level of the sacred.

Giovannino was not willing to let prophecy be extended to the lengths Mussato was trying to take it. The Dominican attacks Mussato's comparisons of secular and sacred in two ways, beginning with history. Aware of the medieval apologetic tradition of harmonizing pagan and Christian truths, he allows some connection between pagan and Christian, but not in any way that calls Scripture's authority into question.⁹² Giovannino

⁸⁹ Witt argues that Mussato's novelty is simply in the thoroughness of his parallels between pagan and Christian stories (*Footsteps*, pp. 159, 246, 252), but I see a deeper challenge. Cf. the development of scriptural signification not rooted in history (described in Ch. 2), and also Lubac on the eventual confusion in the fourteenth century between Scripture's spiritual senses and all other allegory: *Exégèse*, II/2, pp. 213–14.

⁹⁰ One is reminded of the expansive notion of theological inspiration condemned in the heretical Amalricians, who equated Ovid and Augustine: Ch. 4, pp. 120–1.

⁹¹ Mussato's precise familiarity with scholastic treatises themselves cannot be determined, but such theories were promulgated in various ways, including through Vincent of Beauvais's summary both of Thomistic teachings on prophecy and of Peter Lombard's assessment of Davidic prophetic insight: *Speculum maius*, i, XXVI.81–4, 96–111; iv, II.72. Cf. also the dissemination of Peter Lombard's Psalm commentary: Ch. 2, p. 63 n. 65.

⁹² The Dominican seems not to recognize the radical extent of Mussato's references to *fabulae*, taking them to mean not that Mussato thinks Scripture has no historical truth, but rather that Scripture uses allegorical language to cover its truths. In 1327, one Adam Duff

argues that poetry cannot have eternal, sacred value because the first poets (those *prisci poetae*, such as Orpheus, Linus, and Musaeus) lived long after Moses, whereas theology existed and was passed on (*tradita*) from the beginning of the world.⁹³ Furthermore, Giovannino is not willing to accept a prophetic *cento*: highlighting the principle of authorial intention and prophetic understanding, he cites Jerome, who dismissed Proba's work because its words did not signify what they were originally intended to signify.⁹⁴ It was foolish to call Vergil a Christian without Christ; the pagan was not a prophet.

Giovannino also argues that the allegedly profound and mysterious teachings of poet-theologians do not actually accord with Scripture. Insisting on a literal reading of myth as a claim about history, he dismisses it when it does not match up with historical events. In sacred history, for instance, Noah escaped the Flood; but pagan poets state it was Pyrrha and Deucalion, and on that ground they should be rejected.⁹⁵ Giovannino's choice of example is revealing. This is the same story Albert the Great had cited in his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (c.1263), but not as an example of false history. Instead, discussing the ancient poets, whom Albert had also seen as 'myth-lovers' (*philomithes*), Albert had stated (in a text certainly read in Padua) that they were quite similar to philosophers:

the myth-lover is a philosopher in this way: because a fable is constructed by him out of things of wonder. Indeed, I call a myth-lover a poet who loves to create fables . . . A poet creates fables in order to arouse someone towards wonder, because admiration arouses someone further towards inquiry, and thus it accords with philosophy.⁹⁶

was burned in Dublin for calling the Scriptures *fabulae* (while also explicitly denying the Incarnation and Resurrection): J. Grace, *Annales Hiberniae*, ed. R. Butler (Dublin, 1842), pp. 106–8. Closer to home, a Dominican inquisition in Bologna in 1299 noted accusations against a citizen allegedly saying that a gospel author was like any writer in simply writing what he wanted ('ille qui scripsit Evangelium, potuit scribere quicquid voluit'): *Acta Sancti Officii Bononiae ab anno 1291 usque ad annum 1309*, ed. L. Aldovrandi, in *Atti e memorie della R. Deputazione di storia patria per la provincia di Romagna*, ser. 3, 14, (1896–7), pp. 280–1.

⁹³ *Epistola fratris*, p. 10. Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica* (PL 198.1281) is Giovannino's source.

⁹⁴ *Epistola fratris*, p. 12. See Jerome's Ep. 53.7, ed. I. Hilberg in *Epistulae I–LXX*, CSEL 54 (Vienna, 1910).

⁹⁵ *Epistola fratris*, p. 8. Cf. Theodulus, *Ecloga*, ll. 69–76.

⁹⁶ *Metaphysica*, Borgnet 6, I.2.6, p. 30: 'ipse Philomithes secundum hunc modum Philosophus est: quia fabula sua construitur ab ipso ex mirandis. Dico autem Philomiton poetam amantem fingere fabulas . . . [P]oeta fingit fabulam ut excitet ad admirandum, et quod admiratio ulterius excitet ad inquirendum, et sic constet philosophia'. A thirteenth-century manuscript in Padua's Biblioteca Antoniana contains this work: MS Scaff.xiii.660.

Having identified wonder as common to poetry and philosophy, Albert notes that the story of Deucalion served a philosophical purpose (in particular, the study of Nature), and its embodiment in poetic form was precisely to take advantage of its particular literary qualities:

this fable is not intended for any purpose other than arousal towards wondering at the causes of the two floods of water and fire arising from meteors, so that through wonder the cause may be sought, and the truth may be known: and therefore poetry gives a mode of philosophizing just like other logical sciences.⁹⁷

Albert had treated poetry as part of logic, where its value was to offer a mode of wonder (*modum admirandi*) which initiated a philosophical process; the rest of logic continued the process by proving proposals with reason and argumentation.⁹⁸ Aquinas, too, when discussing these 'myth-lovers' (*philomites*), had identified wonder as the element of value in poetic fable, the element which led someone to pursue knowledge.⁹⁹ Rather than focusing on fable solely as a feature of rhetorical invention, both Dominicans saw it as part of philosophical truth-seeking, albeit never on a level equivalent to Scripture.

Giovannino pointedly ignores this element of Dominican mythological poetics. He needs to prevent Mussato's extension of the Dominican arguments. For Giovannino, whatever wonder poetry evokes is akin to that of beholding strange creatures, monsters. It is not the initiation into a philosophical quest for truth but rather the stimulation of imagination due to a false but ornamented exterior. Imagination does not move someone to ethical action.¹⁰⁰ Poetry is thus mere surface. Divine science, however, is 'admirabilis' because of its inwardly (*interius*) truthful content, even while retaining the most excellent outer ornament:

every ornament of rhetorical eloquence, every manner of poetic speech, any variety whatsoever of mixed charm, originated in divine Scripture.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ *Metaphysica* I.2.6, p. 30: 'fabula non intenditur nisi excitatio ad mirandum causas duorum diluviorum aquae et ignis ex orbitatione stellarum erraticarum provenientium, ut per admirationem causa quaeratur, et sciatur veritas: et ideo poesis modum dat philosophandi sicut aliae scientiae logices'. Augustine also refers to Deucalion, though not as myth, but as history: *De civ.* XVIII.8.

⁹⁸ *Metaphysica* I.2.6, p. 30.

⁹⁹ *In Metaphysicam* I.3.55. See also *ST I-II* 32.a8.co.

¹⁰⁰ Many contemporaries, however, believed the opposite, that imagination had a moral component: A. J. Minnis, 'Medieval Imagination and Memory', in *CHLC*, pp. 254–5.

¹⁰¹ *Epistola fratris*, p. 8: 'omnis ornatus rhetoricae eloquentiae, omnes modi poeticae locutionis, quaelibet varietas decorae permixtionis a divinis scripturis sumpsit exordium'.

Giovannino's argument here provides a fine example of what James Kugel calls the contradictory attitude towards poetry that had been developed by the Latin Fathers: surface ornament is dismissed as unimportant compared to true eloquence (which consists of the hidden meanings of sacred writing), while Scripture is simultaneously upheld as the source and paradigm of all surface eloquence.¹⁰² As far as Giovannino was concerned, the more immediate source for this approach lay in Aquinas's sharp distinction between different types of metaphors. Mussato had claimed that a book such as Revelation was poetic because it used imagery and figures,¹⁰³ but Giovannino rejects this association of figural modes. Poetry, he says, uses figures for representation and delight (*ad repraesentandum et delectandum*), that is, for pleasure. Scripture, on the other hand, uses them for necessity, in order to shield divine truths from unworthy (*indigni*) prying eyes and to encourage the believer to dig deeper.¹⁰⁴ Sacred and secular do not meet here, Giovannino insists.

For Mussato, however, Albert's (and Aquinas's) reading of 'philomites' is precisely what he wants to encourage: *admiratio* is the underlying principle of his theological poetics, more so than the use of *fabulae* themselves, and it is a principle with important implications for his understanding of prophecy. Like Albert, Mussato insists, for instance, that the myth of Phaethon has important teachings—it is at once ethical, physical, and mathematical.¹⁰⁵ As poetry, it encompasses all learning. Wonder (*admiratio*) at a poetic creation draws attentive minds beneath the surface, while also creating pleasure. There is an underlying power to poetry, a power both cognitive and what we would call psychological, which draws in (*allicit*) its audience, and Mussato insists, unlike Albert and Aquinas, that this power functions in the same way in both pagan and scriptural writing.¹⁰⁶ Mussato incorporates not only pagan myth but Scripture into a unified poetic theology, one that does not merely express a *desire* for knowledge (as Aquinas would have it), but also embodies that knowledge, in a form of philosophical contemplation.

¹⁰² Kugel, *Biblical Poetry*, pp. 160–1.

¹⁰³ Ep. 4.63–4: 'Apocalis illa, | per varias formas tota poesis erat'.

¹⁰⁴ *Epistola fratris*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁵ Ep. 18.60–2: 'ethica nunc, nunc phisis erit; nunc vera methesis [*sic*]'. Boethius uses 'mathesos' to refer to the quadrivial subjects: *De institutione musica*, ed. G. Friedlein (Leipzig, 1867) I.1. Cf. Jerome's claim that the Book of Isaiah contains 'physica, ethyca, et logica' (*In Esaiam*, prol., pp. 1–2). The *Glossa* replaced 'logica' with 'theologia': *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria*, ed. K. Froehlich and M. T. Gibson, iii (Turnhout, 1992), p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ Ep. 4.59–60.

IV. PROPHECY AND MUSIC

In some places, Mussato seems to attribute poetry's capacity for evoking wonder primarily to this cognitive process of discovering hidden meanings within allegories.¹⁰⁷ But in fact, Mussato also attributes the power of poetry to something else, equally important: its musicality.¹⁰⁸ On the two occasions where Mussato discusses ancient poet-theologians, he shifts the focus of his argument to examples of scriptural prophets, where he emphasizes not their allegories but their music.¹⁰⁹ Mussato claims, for instance, that in Exodus 15 Moses sang a song in hexameter to reconcile ('conciliasse') God and the Hebrews, convincing the people to obey God while also, as it were, pleasing God with musical poetry.¹¹⁰ For Mussato, the significance of Moses' poetry in this example has little to do with an overlay of metaphor or fabular mythology; its conciliatory power lies in its metre, its musical components, which soothe and bring order. In Epistle 7, Mussato reiterates his claims about Moses, again emphasizing that the leader of the Jews procured the favour of God ('conciliasse Deum') with his poetry.¹¹¹ David's creations had the same soothing effect, pleasing God with metrical song as it elevated people in worship and praise.¹¹² Music, like prophecy and—Mussato insists—like poetry, acts as mediator between man and God. Moses' and David's words have a calming and healing impact, not only on people, but on the deity, which is a reminder of the traditional link between poetry, music, prophecy, and the divine in the ancient poet-theologians, especially in the figure of Orpheus. Poetry, for Mussato, embodies the underlying principles of the cosmos, bridging the human and the divine.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. also Ep. 7.33–4: 'wonderful poetry makes people more attentive | when it intends something other than the way its words sound' ('magis attentos facit admiranda poesis | cum secus intendit quam sua verba sonent').

¹⁰⁸ For Greenfield, allegory is 'the central issue of the humanist-scholastic controversy': *Humanist and Scholastic*, p. 28. Her reading omits the importance of music.

¹⁰⁹ Ep. 4.47–60 and 7.21–2. Despite prophets' uses of music, they were not usually called musicians by scholastic exegetes. The Dominican Nicholas Gorran's late thirteenth-century introduction to Scripture, *Principium*, is a rare exception when discussing David, and it requires some reworking of the evidence: when Jerome (Ep. 53.8) compares David to the ancient poet Simonides, the reason, Nicholas says, is not because of David's poetry, but rather because he used diverse musical instruments, and he 'wrote lyrically' ('lirice scripsit'), Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 161, fol. 7v.

¹¹⁰ Ep. 4.61–2: 'Numen ad Hebreos per vasta pericula doctor | dicitur exámetro conciliasse pede'. Jerome is the main source for the belief that portions of the Bible were written along the lines of classical poetry: Kugel, *Biblical Poetry*, pp. 135–70.

¹¹¹ Ep. 7.23–4: 'Dicitur Hebrei populi dux inclitus altum | versibus exametris conciliasse Deum.'

¹¹² Ep. 7.27: 'placavitque Deum metrico Psalmista canore'.

The idea that musicality is one of the defining features of prophetic writing is nonsensical to Giovannino, and he dismisses it brusquely. Although he accepts the idea (as everyone then did) that Moses wrote in hexameters, Giovannino asserts derisively that this was only so his words could be sung in choruses and especially by women.¹¹³ Metre has nothing to do with the sacred, even if it contains theological truths, as in earlier Christian poets like Arator and Sedulius.¹¹⁴ Form and content are distinct: the poetic, musical mode of writing has little relation to its theological status.

In order to make these claims, Giovannino has to depart significantly from earlier medieval positions on music, which often identified it as a central feature of Creation, with harmonious number (*numerus*) a common principle of both nature and poetry, the basis of all knowledge, and the connection between body and soul.¹¹⁵ Through music, knowledge could be therapeutic. At the same time, medieval grammatical education offered general exposure to song via the Psalms and liturgical singing, exposure that could readily prompt the blurring of scriptural song with other forms of sacred song.¹¹⁶ This was evident, too, in Nicholas Trevet's engagement with Boethius and the Psalms, which led him to emphasize how poetry and music brought sacred and secular inspiration closer. In Padua, music was a subject of particular importance; since one of the specialties of the *studium* was medicine, all potential effects on the body were significant.¹¹⁷ Pietro d'Abano discussed authoritative treatments of music such as Boethius', while exploring in particular music's physical effects.¹¹⁸ For Mussato, poetry relies on these principles.

Mussato ultimately saw poetry as a combination of universal musicality and divine insight. In Epistle 18 (in response to Giovannino's claim that poetry is a purely secular art), he says that both Platonist poets (*Platonisti*

¹¹³ *Epistola fratris*, p. 10: 'in choreis et maxime mulierum'.

¹¹⁴ *Epistola fratris*, p. 10. For more on these late-antique poets, see R. P. H. Green, *Latin Epics of the New Testament* (Oxford, 2006).

¹¹⁵ See especially Augustine, *De musica*, ed. G. Finaert and F.-J. Thonnard (Paris, 1947) VI, which is entitled 'Deus numerorum aeternorum fons et origo'; Boethius, *De musica* I.1; and Isidore, *Etymologiae* III.17; trans., p. 95: 'without music, no other discipline can be perfected, for nothing is without music'.

¹¹⁶ K. Zieman, *Singing the New Song: Literacy and Liturgy in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia, PA, 2008), pp. 3, 30; and M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 112, 121 n. 66. Cf. also Ch. 2, p. 82 n. 160.

¹¹⁷ Siraisi, *Arts*, p. 68. The thirteenth century, furthermore, was developing a greater appreciation of the sensible, physical quality of music: see Ch. 5, pp. 165–6.

¹¹⁸ Siraisi, *Arts*, pp. 95–9. Pietro's *Conciliator differentiarum philosophorum et praecipue medicorum* (Venice, 1496), *differentia* 83, insists that music is crucial for the study of medicine. His *Expositio Problematum Aristotelis* (Mantua, 1475), *particula* 19, treats music, with one subsection (19.39) dedicated to poetry.

poetae) and Isidore testify to poetry's sacred origins.¹¹⁹ Poetry, in fact, governs (*imperat*) the contents of the mind (*mens*), and, as a result, its music brings not only delight but also understanding, not only psychological but also cognitive effects:

For it does not please the true God by modulation alone,
uttering its songs only for this end;
but earlier, rising up to the heavens from the origin of the world,
it searches through contemplation things observed in the stars.¹²⁰

Here Mussato adapts and revises Boethius' ideas about music. Boethius had promoted music as a form of knowledge, but he had privileged the theorist as the true *musicus* over both the practitioner and the composer (including the poet, despite Boethius' own poetry). While the theorist had *scientia*, the musical composer created song more by natural instinct (*naturalis instinctus*) than by reason (*ratio*).¹²¹ It was due to musical theory, therefore, that music was part of the quadrivium, considering the true form and nature of things.¹²² The music theorist Marchetto of Padua (*fl.* 1305–19), who was also Padua's cathedral choir director in the early 1300s, overcame this prejudice by linking the theorist and the singer/composer, 'inasmuch as he puts into practice what he has previously investigated through rational process'.¹²³ Mussato establishes the same connection, emphasizing the musician's access to divine truth through philosophic contemplation.

Mussato concludes that poetry is not logic or dialectic but inspired wisdom, a method of discovering revelation.¹²⁴ In this sense, then, poetry is not to be equated with ethics or ideas; its precise content matters less than its musicality.¹²⁵ In other words, poetically at least, myth and

¹¹⁹ Ep. 18.97–100: 'a sacro . . . fonte venit divina poesis'. Mussato is probably referring to Isidore's discussion of the poet-theologians: see p. 204 n. 66.

¹²⁰ Ep. 18.106–9: 'Nam verum non ipsa Deum modulamine solo | placat, ad hunc tantum prodens sua carmina finem; | sed prior exurgens summis ab origine mundi | intuitu speculata suo rimatur in astris'.

¹²¹ *De musica* I.34. Augustine expressed the same idea in his own *De musica* (I.4.6, I.6.11), when he declared that even birds can create music; as with prophecy, knowledge (*scientia*) was more important than speech.

¹²² Boethius, *De musica* I.1: the *disciplinae* of the quadrivium work to discover truth ('in investigatione veritatis laborent').

¹²³ *Lucidarium*, ed. and trans. J. W. Herlinger (Chicago, 1985) XVI.1.5, pp. 548–9: 'practicando ea que iam per rationem cognovit'.

¹²⁴ Umberto Eco argues that Mussato's claim for art's powers was something new in the Middle Ages: *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. H. Bredin (London, 1988), p. 166. Contrast Alan of Lille, for whom the obscurity of poetic metaphor justifies calling it theological because of the difficulty of describing the divine: *Anticlaudianus*, ed. R. Bossuat (Paris, 1955), prose prol. 41.

¹²⁵ Mussato would thus object to Giovannino's (and Aquinas's) attitude towards the translation of Scripture. Aquinas was nonetheless willing to admit that, for sacred music in

Scripture—Venus and the Virgin Mary—are equivalent.¹²⁶ That which the priests celebrate during Mass is exactly what the poets sing.¹²⁷ Here, the broad notion of contemporary prophecy that Aquinas had accepted within the Church when he promoted prophetic activity as preaching, teaching, and worship was now pushing beyond the confines he sought to impose. While Aquinas declared the singing of Scripture within a church liturgy to be ‘prophetic’, Mussato challenges the educated clerical monopoly on liturgy. He equates liturgy with poetry, regardless of its subject matter. Poetry’s harmonious beauty is at the root of philosophy, theology, and Scripture. This beauty is more important for poetry than any doctrine a poem might hide under allegory or any obscure prediction it might make.

For Mussato, the Old Testament prophets confirm that poetry grants more than natural philosophic knowledge. Poetic inspiration is supernatural:

Thus David and Jacob, once guide of the people,
after conceiving God in their minds, worshipped Him with the sounds
of song, stretching out their instruments to the highest heaven.¹²⁸

Poetry is both the source and the end of the prophetic vision: it is ‘a reflection of the divine perfection and a means to its contemplation’.¹²⁹ The contemplation Mussato has in mind is neither spontaneous uncultivated rapture nor a vision of sacred historical events. As with Trever’s Boethius, Mussato’s notion of inspiration retains its ties to philosophy, even as it uses imagery and music to express its wisdom. According to Mussato, Old Testament prophets used music as leaders of the Hebrew people because it was the proper way to offer praise to God, while at the same time providing necessary instruction.¹³⁰ Poetry retains its power and standing, not by prediction, but by insight, combined with the power of its language. Thus, in connecting poetry to prophets, Mussato puts less emphasis on any particular revelations or predictions they might have had and more on their access to a universal, perpetual understanding of spiritual realities.

church, the effect matters more than precise understanding of all the words, since the music’s purpose is to increase devotion: *ST* II-II 91.a2.ad.2, 4–5.

¹²⁶ Mussato equates these two figures in Ep. 7.7–10. ¹²⁷ Ep. 7.9.

¹²⁸ Ep. 18.110–2: ‘Sic David et quondam populi conductor Iacob | conceptum post mente Deum coluere canoris | vocibus, ad summum pandentes organa celum’.

¹²⁹ Greenfield, *Humanist and Scholastic*, p. 84.

¹³⁰ Moses spoke ‘ad laudem Dei pro educatione populi Israelitici’: quoted by Giovannino, *Epistola fratris*, p. 4.

This grasp of eternal truths is the reason Mussato believes the appellation 'vates' has been stolen from its rightful owners. A person who is inspired is first and foremost a poet; only in a secondary sense does the word signify priest or prophet.¹³¹ For Mussato, the word originally meant 'vessel of God': 'quisquis erat vates, vas erat ille Dei'.¹³² The allusion to St Paul, the 'vas electionis' (Acts 9:15), is clear. This etymology (*vas Dei*) was a recent development, first occurring, apparently, in William Brito's mid-thirteenth-century *Summa*, where the 'vas dei' was either a priest because of holiness ('per sanctimoniam') or a prophet ('divini et prophete') because prophets seem to contain God through foreknowledge ('continere... deum per futurorum prescientiam').¹³³ Brito used *viendo* (binding) for poets, but Mussato ignores this etymology and appropriates 'vas dei' for poets. Mussato's vessels of God sing what they have contemplated: their insights into the divine are the first source of theological revelation and the origin of liturgical worship, as the examples of both Orpheus and David reveal.

Giovannino attacks this particular etymological claim in his letter by providing an alternative one.¹³⁴ Acknowledging that the word *vates* can be used 'de poeta, philosopho, sacerdote, et propheta', Giovannino assigns each variant its own particular etymology:

[*vates*] is used of 'poet' from *vieo vies*, which is to bind, because a poet has to bind feet and metres; ... it is used of 'philosopher' from strength of mind (*vis mentis*), because philosophers were good in this manner. It is used of 'priest' and 'prophet' not only from *vis mentis*, but from *vas* and 'god' (*θεός*), ... because they hold God (*continere Deum*) continually in their minds and hearts.¹³⁵

Separating firmly each of the meanings (but bringing philosophy as well under the vatic umbrella), Giovannino reveals their distinct instantiations: poetry is merely verbal arrangement according to metre; philosophy uses mental strength, and the priest and prophet are sacred vessels that contain God. 'Vates', therefore, exists in three semantically unrelated, though

¹³¹ Ep. 18.88–91.

¹³² Ep. 7.20.

¹³³ Brito uses *vas dei* as an alternative etymology for priests and prophets (in addition to *vis mentis*): *Summa Britonis*, ed. L. W. Daly and B. A. Daly, ii (Padua, 1975), p. 817, and cf. Trevet's use of Brito: Ch. 5, p. 167. The term 'vas dei' does not appear in Scripture, nor in Isidore, Papias, or Uguccione. The Dominican Johannes Balbus (d.1298) repeats Brito's etymology in his encyclopaedic *Catholicon* (Mainz, 1460; repr. Westmead, 1971), s.v. 'Vates'.

¹³⁴ Though Giovannino claims to be quoting Isidore, the text actually seems to be a cobbling together of several sources.

¹³⁵ *Epistola fratris*, p. 8: 'de poeta dicitur a *vieo vies*, quod est ligare, eo quod poeta habet pedes et metra ligare; ... de philosopho, sic potius dici a *vi mentis*, eo quod philosophi secundum modum suum viri virtuosii fuerunt. Secundum quod dicitur de sacerdote et propheta, sic non solum a *vi mentis*, sed a *vas* et *θεός*, ... eo quod in ore et corde habeant Deum continere'.

identical, forms. There is no overlap in these roles—poetry is not philosophy, and neither poets nor philosophers are divinely inspired. Giovannino has already shown an inclination to outdo Dominicans such as Albert and Aquinas in an effort to keep sacred and secular texts apart, and his distinct etymologies perform that task as well. For Mussato, on the other hand, such an etymological (and conceptual) division is spurious. The identical name reveals overlapping identities.¹³⁶

In fact, Mussato's notions of vatic inspiration are significantly closer to scholastic theories than they are to some of his fellow Paduan humanists. Two anonymous Paduan authors, most likely professors of grammar at the *studium*, wrote an analysis of the arguments of Mussato and Giovannino's debate soon after it occurred.¹³⁷ Summarizing what they believed to be Mussato's claim, the authors found Giovannino's attempt at etymological argument capricious ('ad libitum') and baseless.¹³⁸ It is not only priests, philosophers, and Old Testament prophets who deserve to be called *vates*, they say; anyone in a frenzy (*furiosus*) or predicting the future ('*futura praedicunt*') is a *vates*—for instance, sorceresses and sibyls.¹³⁹ The authors are evoking here the traditional medieval notion of the pagan *vates* as inspired with foresight. This is not, however, what Mussato is actually arguing: as with Aquinas, madness is not part of Mussato's concept of a vessel of God, nor is prediction central.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Giovannino followed the encyclopaedists Brito and Balbus in separating poets from priests and prophets, but neither of those sources speak of philosophers as *vates*. The Dominican Nicholas Gorran (d.1295) seems to be the earliest theologian to use Brito's 'vas dei' etymology, and he may also be Giovannino's immediate model for the addition of 'philosophus'. Gorran described the prophet David as a musician (see p. 212 n. 109), but he described the prophet Daniel as 'philosophicus' with 'clear speech' (*clarus sermo*): *Principium*, MS Laud Misc. 161, fol. 7v. Gorran equates *vates* with 'philosophos... a vas... , et theos quod est deus': fol. 2v. These *vates* contain God (*deum continere*) like a vessel because of the depth of their knowledge (*profunditas scientie*). Mussato turned Brito's *vates* into poets, while Gorran turned them into thinkers.

¹³⁷ *Declaratio epistolae responsivae*, ed. E. Garin, in *Il pensiero*, pp. 12–19. The authors are most likely the same Castellano and Guizzardo who wrote the *Evidentia harum epistolarum* (described on p. 198 n. 28): Billanovich: 'Preumanesimo', p. 74.

¹³⁸ *Declaratio*, p. 14.

¹³⁹ *Declaratio*, p. 14: 'pythonissae et sybilla... appellatae sunt vates'.

¹⁴⁰ In only one place does Mussato use the madness trope, but it is an allusion to Horace's description in *Ars poetica* (l. 79) of the raging Archilochus, inventor of iambic verse: Ep. 1.67, 71, 104. Regarding Mussato's opinions of apocalyptic prophecy, there is no information; intriguing, however, is his discussion of the role of the Spiritual Franciscan Ubertino of Casale at the court of Ludwig of Bavaria in 1328: *Ludovicus Bavarus*, ed. J. F. Böhmer, in *Fontes rerum Germanicarum* 1 (Stuttgart, 1843), pp. 175–6. Mussato mentions the Franciscan poverty dispute, while also suggesting that Ubertino (along with Marsilius of Padua) was a bad influence on Ludwig's attempted deposition of Pope John XXII, which Mussato opposed. See also Godthardt, 'Life of Marsilius', pp. 45–8.

Mussato's emphasis on the universal qualities of music and philosophical contemplation gathers pagan writers and Hebrew prophets together as *vates*, but he includes poets in the Christian age as well. In Mussato's hands, poetry, as if it were the Holy Spirit itself, becomes the revelatory source of prophetic insight, moving on the face of the waters since the beginning of the world.¹⁴¹ Poetry's subject is always the good, even if some poets (such as Ovid) abuse the gift of inspiration.¹⁴² Like the Holy Spirit, poetry is a power still at work in the world; it is not confined to a period before Christ:

Behold those things which, as witnesses, new poets both set forth
and at the same time sang after the birth of our God.¹⁴³

Revelation then continues after the Incarnation among *novi poetae*. The fourth-century writer Claudian, for instance, is a sacred poet—'nostris e vatibus unus'—who spoke of the inner (*intima*) mysteries of the risen Christ in his poem, *De salvatore*.¹⁴⁴ The Church also uses poetry in the liturgy, like the *vates* of old.¹⁴⁵

The real import, therefore, of Mussato's claims about the persistence of sacred poetic inspiration is that its universal power applies not only to early Christian poets but also to those in the present day, including himself. That his defence of poetry is ultimately about his own vocation is clear from the letter he wrote (Ep. 7) against Giovanni di Vigonza. Mussato's coronation as poet laureate encouraged him to place himself in the long line of ancient *vates*, and he relates that the day of coronation was a holy one (*dies sacra*), on which he was made a poet (*poeta*) in the ancient manner ('Moribus antiquis').¹⁴⁶ He became then a 'vates', and was in essence ordained to a great 'ministerium', that is, 'the office of

¹⁴¹ Ep. 18.83: 'fuit a primis ars ista theologa mundi | principiis'.

¹⁴² Ep. 18.93–4. Curtius observes that much of this high-minded language about sacred poetry comes in defence of a priapic poem: *European Literature*, p. 220. Mussato never explains how the priapic fits into his scheme of high poetry, or how Ovid's work differs from priapic poems, since both could be read allegorically, as well as musically.

¹⁴³ Ep. 18.116–7: 'Cerne Dei testes que post natalia nostri / et posuere novi simul et cecinere poete'.

¹⁴⁴ Ep. 18.118–9.

¹⁴⁵ In the persona of Poetry, Mussato writes, "Hail holy parent" and the following words I speak; | the holy Mass is said with heroic foot. | Holy vespers is sung more solemnly with my hymns, | I appease the highest divinity with sweet-sounding metres' ("Salve sancta parens" et verba sequentia dico, | dicitur heroico cum sacra Missa pede. | Vespera sancta meis canitur solemnior ymnis | placo dulcisonis numina summa metris'): Ep. 7.11–4.

¹⁴⁶ Ep. 4.13. In 1317, soon after these epistolary debates, a commentary on the *Ecerinis* appeared by the two likely authors of the *Evidentia* and the *Declaratio*, Castellano and Guizzardo, further promoting the Paduan view that Mussato's work deserved the highest esteem: *Commentum super tragoedia Ecerinide*, ed. L. Padrin, in *Ecerinide* (Bologna, 1900), pp. 67–247. Their text helps support Minnis's theory that commentaries on contemporary

preacher'.¹⁴⁷ In his response to the grammarian Giovanni, Mussato states that, as poet, he has the duties, not only of priesthood, but of prophecy: 'this duty of the art seizes no one except prophets!'¹⁴⁸ Mussato himself is thus one of the *maiores* who instruct contemporaries with authority.

In his assertion of a continuous form of inspiration, a breathing-in of the Spirit that occurs at all times, Mussato articulates a relationship to antiquity that differs in important respects from his colleagues in the Paduan circle of humanists. Certainly, Mussato's high esteem for antiquity is evident in his imitative *Ecerinis*. At the same time, his self-identification with the ancients is not unlike Dante's bold proclamation in the *Inferno* that he was welcomed into the 'bella scola' of poets such as Homer and Vergil.¹⁴⁹ Such an approach is quite distinct from the philological one taken by Geremia of Montagnone in his *Compendium*. Geremia compiled a literary history from antiquity to the present, with a precise chronology that distinguished clearly between classical and post-classical poets, giving every classical figure the title 'poeta' while those who wrote after Isidore of Seville received the appellation 'versilogus' or 'doctor grammaticus'.¹⁵⁰ This historical classification, articulating a period of decline after the ancient era, is generally taken to be an innovation and an early sign of a particular humanist attitude towards the past, namely an awareness of its distance from the present.¹⁵¹ Mussato, by contrast, for all his interest in classical style, rejects the implications of Geremia's work. Admittedly, Mussato speaks of no medieval *poetae* other than himself (Claudian being securely among the ancients), but his arguments suggest that post-classical poets are equally inspired, with no distinctions made on the basis of style. Nor does he conceive of his own poetry simply as an imitation of the past, of the sort evoked by Lovato's phrase, 'the traces of

authors similar to those on ancient works were part of the process by which medieval authors gained confidence in the value of poetry: *MLTC*, pp. 373ff.

¹⁴⁷ Ep. 4.43, 75–6. The meaning of 'ministerium' comes from the Vulgate (e.g., Acts 6:4): *A Latin Dictionary*, ed. C. T. Lewis and C. Short (Oxford, 1879; repr. 1996).

¹⁴⁸ Ep. 4.44: 'non nisi divinos hoc capit artis opus!' Greenfield (*Humanist and Scholastic*, p. 81) translates the word 'divinos' as 'those divine', but according to Lewis and Short, in classical and scriptural sources 'divinus' also means, as a substantive, 'soothsayer, prophet' and is a synonym of 'vates': *Latin Dictionary*, s.v., 'divinus'. Cf. Isidore and William Brito's uses: Ch. 2, p. 79, and Ch. 6, p. 216.

¹⁴⁹ *Inferno*, ed. R. Hollander (New York, 2000), 4.94, 100–1. For Mussato's possible knowledge of *Inferno*, see Dazzi, *Mussato*, pp. 71–80. Whether Mussato ever read the rest of the *Commedia* has not been established. For a summary of Dante and Mussato's relationship, see G. Martellotti, 'Mussato, Albertino', in U. Bosco (ed.), *Enciclopedia dantesca*, iii (Rome, 1970–8), pp. 1066–8.

¹⁵⁰ Cited in R. Weiss, *Il primo secolo dell'umanesimo* (Rome, 1949), p. 28.

¹⁵¹ Weiss, *Il primo secolo*, p. 28; and R. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati* (Durham, NC, 1983), p. 6.

old poets (*vates*) to be followed'.¹⁵² Instead, the very same spirit of poetry inspires at all times, in continuity with past, present, and future.

Mussato's self-identification with a tradition of revelatory inspiration is expressed more fully in Epistle 7, which Mussato writes in the voice of Poetry—'I sing sacred things'.¹⁵³ Poetry, he states, has an eternal, creative spirit:

I have not created anything but that which nature demanded,
I took care to signify in various ways . . .
Through me the ages of the perpetual world are remembered.
By my law, *vates* speak with song and measure,
our music travels to God on high.¹⁵⁴

It is this spirit—which mediates between human and divine, between temporal and eternal—that Mussato claims as his own. The Incarnation did not alter the nature of revelation. Mussato seeks to establish a prophetic, inspired mode that can grant poets authority to speak divine truths in the present.¹⁵⁵

V. TRAGEDY

In his influential study of Mussato, E. R. Curtius famously argued that, regardless of the Paduan's eloquent theorizing, he saw no evidence of poetic theology in Mussato's actual poetry.¹⁵⁶ Such an assessment misses the crucial point that Mussato's insistence on the divine source of poetic creation did not mean he intended to versify Christian doctrine. He did not want content to be divorced from form, nor content to be expressed as discrete articles of faith. Although Mussato points out that poets have uttered philosophical and theological truths, what he emphasizes in biblical prophets is the healing power of their music interwoven with their

¹⁵² Ep. 3.87, in C. Foligno, 'Epistole inedite di Lovato de' Lovati e d'altri a lui', *Studi Medievali*, 2 (1906–7), p. 51: 'sectanda . . . veterum vestigia vatum'. In this sense, Curtius is right to argue that Mussato's poetic theory is not strictly humanist: *European Literature*, p. 220.

¹⁵³ Ep. 7.9: 'Sacra cano'.

¹⁵⁴ Ep. 7.79–80, 87, 97–8: 'Non ego quid finxi, sed quod natura reposcit | curavi variis significare modis . . . | Per me perpetui memorantur tempora mundi . . . | Lege mea vates cantu normaue locuntur, | migrat ad excelsum musica nostra Deum'.

¹⁵⁵ Very different, for instance, is the contemporaneous heresy attributed to followers of Guglielmo of Milan: their belief (condemned by Dominican inquisitors) that she was the Holy Spirit incarnate relied on a Joachimite notion of a new age of the Spirit. See M. Benedetti, 'Frate Niccolò/Benedetto XI, gli inquisitori, gli eretici', in *Benedetto XI, frate Predicatore e papa* (Milan, 2007), pp. 55–94.

¹⁵⁶ *European Literature*, p. 220.

contemplative insight into the nature of things. Curtius was, in effect, looking for poetic theology in the wrong place.

Mussato's description of poets and prophets sounds remarkably similar to Trevet's discussion of Boethius and Seneca, so it is no surprise that, for Mussato, such poetic theology found its most perfect expression in the writing of tragedy. Mussato theorized about tragedy in two works not addressed by Giovannino since they appear to have been written in 1316, shortly after the epistolary exchange.¹⁵⁷ These texts—the *Evidentia tragediarum Seneca* (composed at the request of Marsilius of Padua) and the *Seneca vita et mores*—are not cited as frequently as the epistles in scholarly discussions of Mussato's defence of poetic theology, but they are explicit evidence of tragedy's centrality to his conclusions, and of the significance of Seneca not just as moral philosopher but, equally importantly, as poet.¹⁵⁸ These two texts are also evidence of the confluence of efforts to promote Seneca by Nicholas Trevet and Cardinal Nicholas Albertini of Prato. Albertini is the most likely reason that, almost immediately after completion, one of Trevet's Seneca commentaries reached Padua and was read by Mussato soon after 1315.¹⁵⁹

Mussato found in Seneca the intellectual authority he needed to justify his own claims. Using Pseudo-Seneca's correspondence with St Paul, Mussato concluded—perhaps for the first time in the Middle Ages—that Seneca converted to Christianity, which allowed him to claim that the Roman had taught Christian truths in his correspondence with the apostle.¹⁶⁰ Seneca's wonderful moral exhortations suggested divine inspiration to Mussato ('non ex te . . . sed per te'), for Seneca was a theological poet just like the first poets who used the veils of allegory to lead their audiences through wonder (*admiratio*) to contemplate the divine ('ad

¹⁵⁷ For the dates, see Billanovich, 'Preumanesimo', pp. 76–7.

¹⁵⁸ The texts do not appear in the early printed editions of Mussato's *corpus*, so Curtius, for instance, did not have access to them: Dazzi, *Mussato*, p. 117 n. 99. Both are edited by A. Megas, *Ho prooumanistikos kyklos tēs Padouas (Lovato Lovati-Albertino Mussato) kai hoi tragōdies tou L.A. Seneca* (Thessaloniki, 1967). Gillespie provides one of the more recent analyses: V. Gillespie, 'The Study of Classical Authors: From the Twelfth Century to c.1450', in *CHLC*, p. 219.

¹⁵⁹ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 1769, which belonged to Lovato's nephew Rolando da Piazzola, contains Trevet's commentary on Seneca's *Hercules furens*, in the margins of which are Mussato's autograph glosses (mostly on mythography): Billanovich, 'Abbozzi e postille', pp. 24ff.; and Monti, 'Il corpus', pp. 52–60. For Albertini's connections to Mussato, see Ch. 5, pp. 186–7.

¹⁶⁰ *Seneca vita*, p. 155: 'Seneca noscitur Christianus'. The same manuscript in which Mussato read Trevet on *Hercules furens* contained the Ps-Senecan correspondence as well as Jerome's praise of Seneca, excerpted from *De viris illustribus*, ed. C. A. Bernoulli (Frankfurt, 1968), ch. 12. See Monti, 'Il corpus', pp. 62, 68. For Mussato as the first to claim Seneca's conversion based on this correspondence, see L. Panizza, 'Gasparino Barzizza's Commentaries on Seneca's Letters', *Traditio*, 33 (1977), p. 307 n. 39.

contemplationem divinam').¹⁶¹ As with his poetic theory in general, however, Mussato did not regard tragedy to be based solely on *fabulae*. In defining the genre, Mussato argues that it pertains to subjects in which there are great reversals of fortune; tragic metre and style express songs (*carmina*) of the highest sadness and joy.¹⁶² Tragedy uses 'lamentatio' to bewail misfortunes (*infortunia*), but it is also a useful song (*utile carmen*) because it induces fear and then strengthens the mind against the vicissitudes of life.¹⁶³

With this overarching purpose in mind, Mussato, like Trevet, clearly relied on Boethius, a *poeta tragicus* himself,¹⁶⁴ just as much as Seneca, to connect his ideas of tragedy to poetic theology and to prophetic inspiration.¹⁶⁵ Trevet's Boethius commentary, in fact, is most likely the one Mussato used, and the Paduan's interpretations often align with the Dominican's.¹⁶⁶ The *Consolation's* opening scene, for example, where Lady Philosophy expels the poetic Muses, had been highlighted by Giovannino to prove the uselessness of poetry for conveying philosophical truths and for strengthening someone to face life's contingencies. Giovannino had argued,

Thus poetry has outwardly a certain beauty; inwardly, however, it has the bitterness of vanities, for which reason perhaps Boethius called the poetic muses 'theatrical whores'.¹⁶⁷

Mussato responded by giving this scene an entirely different meaning, one consistent with Trevet's understanding of it: at that moment, Boethius needed more than the sweet songs of Melpomene (the muse of Tragic Poetry) and her sisters (presumably other genres of poetry). Boethius therefore called on a different group of Muses, led by Urania, the muse of Astronomy, a member of the quadrivium, whose customary course was the heavens and who had always assisted theology (*theologa*).¹⁶⁸ In other

¹⁶¹ *Seneca vita*, pp. 154–5, and p. 157: 'sub allegoriis, enigmatibus, similitudinibus ac transfigurationibus, parabolis et figuris'.

¹⁶² *Seneca vita*, p. 159.

¹⁶³ *Evidentia tragediarum* p. 124; and Ep. 1.74, 105, 93–4: 'mentes ad contingentia fortes | efficit'.

¹⁶⁴ *Evidentia tragediarum*, p. 126.

¹⁶⁵ Mussato cites Boethius (*De consolazione* II.pr.2.12) for his definition of tragedy's subject as the indiscriminate blows of fortune: *Seneca vita*, p. 159.

¹⁶⁶ Greenfield calls Mussato's views on tragic poetry 'novel' (*Humanist and Scholastic*, pp. 86–7), but Trevet had already developed similar ones: see Ch. 5, pp. 161ff.

¹⁶⁷ *Epistola fratris*, p. 10: 'Sic poetica exterius habet quandam decorum verborum; interius autem amaritudinem vanitatum, propter quod forte Boethius poeticas musas "scenicas meretriculas" appellavit'.

¹⁶⁸ Ep. 18.157–60: 'poposcit | Uraniem toto solitam discurrere celo | et reliquas comites, quibus alta theologia semper | a serie primi fuerat notissima seculi'.

words, rather than yielding ground to an image of Lady Philosophy as grim dialectic, Mussato recognizes, like Trevet, that Philosophy calls upon Muses of her own. Indeed, both Urania *and* Melpomene assisted Boethius in his poetic task: 'From the two together he made a wonderful work, | composing his whole poetry from each part'.¹⁶⁹ The highest poetry thus combines two types—philosophical or metaphysical poetry and tragic poetry. For Trevet, it was poetry's music that bound these elements together. Mussato is no different: with Lady Philosophy, wisdom unites with poetry, incorporating a tragic insight into Fortune as well as the sweet harmonies of music. This is how philosophy consoles.

The philosophic wisdom of tragic poetry comes from a Muse alternately stoking fear and then consoling. The blows of indiscriminate Fortune upon the heart (*pectora*) need softening (*mulcere*) and healing through calm words (*placida verba*).¹⁷⁰ Mussato clearly alludes to and reworks Boethius' description of the power of poetic theology: 'mulcere' is used only once in the *Consolation*, when Orpheus' peaceful (*placidum*) song creates divine harmony all around him, although for Boethius the song did not soothe (*mulcere*) its distraught creator's heart (*pectus*).¹⁷¹ Drawing in and soothing its listeners with delight, poetic theology at the same time strengthens against adversity and grants understanding of the nature of things, namely of the flux of time and contingency. Rather than ethical behaviour, it is divine consolation, traditionally associated with the Holy Spirit's role as Paraclete, that emerges for Mussato as central to tragic poetry.¹⁷² Thus, even though Mussato's conception at times approaches that of the prophet-preacher articulated by Humbert of Romans—teacher

¹⁶⁹ Ep. 18.161–2: 'Ex binis confecit opus mirabile totam | ex utraque suam componens parte poesim'. Dazzi interprets Melpomene as delight, Urania as the sacred element in poetry: *Mussato*, p. 113. I believe it important, however, to emphasize as well the concerns Melpomene has for the sufferings created by Fortune. Both interpretations existed side by side in the Middle Ages, as is clear from a thirteenth-century addition to Eberhard of Béthune's *Graecismus*, called 'De nominibus Musarum et gentilium', in which two listings for Melpomene are given, one for delight, one for tragedy: *Graecismus*, ed. J. Wrobel (Bratislava, 1887), ch. 7, p. 23. In Ep. 5, Mussato also uses Urania to signify prophetic foreknowledge of political events, in reference to the emperor Henry VII's arrival in Italy: *HR*, fasc. 7, pp. 50–1.

¹⁷⁰ Ep. 18.60–1: 'Nunc tibi quo metuas fert horrida Musa timores, | nunc lenis placidis mulcet tua pectora verbis'.

¹⁷¹ *De consolatione* III.m12.17. Vergil uses *mulcere* in the *Georgics* for Orpheus' effect on wild beasts: 'mulcentem tigris': ed. R. F. Thomas, ii (Cambridge, 1988) IV.510. Cf. Macrobius' description of Orpheus as both a maker of philosophical fables (*In Somnium* I.2.9) and as a soothing musician (II.3.7–8).

¹⁷² Castellano and Guizzardo's commentary on the *Ecerinis*, on the other hand, places tragedy under ethics because of its *exempla*, and under theology because early poet-theologians used *fabulae*: *Super Ecerinide*, p. 83.

and guide through knowledge and elevated language—Mussato's primary focus is not on doctrine or moral persuasion but rather on consolation.¹⁷³

The Boethian model of tragic insight interwoven with the healing power of music is ultimately what shapes Mussato's conception of poetic theology. He admits that there are 'scenicae meretriculae'—this is why he dismisses, not only Ovid's erotic poems, but also any acting that accompanies plays. The *Ecerinis*, in consequence, was meant to be declaimed, not acted out, for Mussato accepted Augustine's critique that such visible gesturing created immorality and false emotions.¹⁷⁴ Augustine's attacks have no purchase on *poetry*, however, since poetry's truth, for Mussato, lies ultimately in its musical harmony rather than its representations. In this way, one can make sense of Mussato's claim that tragedy ultimately rejects the use of *fabulae*—'no *fabula* plays in its verses'.¹⁷⁵ This claim does not accord with his discussion of Seneca's allegories in the *Seneca vita*, but it does align with Mussato's other statements about musicality: tragedy, like a hymn, and like the prophets' songs, is more music than fable.¹⁷⁶

Mussato's interpretation of Boethius—which is practically identical to Trevet's—leads Mussato to posit the poet as the true source of vatic authority. Unlike the lay Joachimist or mystic, Mussato's prophetic claims are not based on a direct experience of the divine presence, though they are a similar challenge to the authority of professional theologians. Mussato resists the limits of the ecclesiastical context for prophecy urged by Aquinas, yet at the same time, his model resembles the scholastic model

¹⁷³ Consolation was a firm part of Italian grammatical and rhetorical training. For instance, the *Rhetorica antiqua* of Boncompagno da Signa (whose pupil Rolandino of Padua taught grammar and rhetoric in Padua after 1260) contains a chapter called *De consolationibus*: see P. von Moos, *Consolatio*, i; ii (Munich, 1971–2) pp. 403–7; 224–6; and Kristeller, 'Umanesimo', p. 4. Arrigo da Settimello's *Elegia, sive de miseria*, written in the 1190s, was also popular in north Italian schools as a grammatical primer: G. McClure, *Sorrow and Consolation in Italian Humanism* (Princeton, NJ, 1990), pp. 15–17. The *Elegia*, ed. C. Fossati (Florence, 2011), follows a Boethian model of questioning Fortune through a dialogue with Wisdom (*Fronesis*) and her cohort of liberal arts. Seneca, Boethius, and Ovid are all cited as examples of those who bore suffering, while Orpheus is invoked for his healing music.

¹⁷⁴ Ep. 7. 69–76. See also *Seneca vita*, pp. 158–9. Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones*, ed. J. J. O'Donnell (Oxford, 1992) III.2; and *De civ.* IV.26, VI.7.

¹⁷⁵ Ep. 1.74: 'versibus alludit fabula nulla suis'. Mussato here diverges from Trevet: cf. Ch. 5, pp. 183–4.

¹⁷⁶ Mussato recognizes tragedy as a genre distinct from epic and lyric in Ep. 1, but the distinction collapses when he discusses poetry at its highest level. Despite the *Ecerinis*'s political subject, Mussato clearly has an understanding of tragedy that moves beyond the narrow strictures of fallen kingdoms. Kelly says Mussato came by a roundabout way to the ancient Greek conception: so long as the subject is an elevated one, the outcome does not matter: *Tragedy*, p. 137. Cf. *Seneca vita*, p. 159: 'through tragic songs (*trageda carmina*) are expressed and represented the highest (*summe*) sadness, joys, and other passions of the soul'.

of inspired intellectual. But Mussato insisted that inspired wisdom was found not just in clerical preaching or teaching but also, and especially, in poetry. In this way, Mussato followed Trevet and extended the Dominican notion of prophetic prudence into poetic consolation. Prudence, as an intellectual virtue and the foundation of all other virtues, granted poets, whose words were both wise and effective, the authority to offer guidance.¹⁷⁷

Mussato would have received encouragement to take the steps he did from the distinctive cultural milieu of Padua, including the Aristotelianism introduced from Paris. Pietro d'Abano offered an intellectual model through his scientific studies, confident that studying the world *naturaliter* would confirm theology.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, the Paduan commune attempted to subject ecclesiastical power to civic authority by abolishing clerical legal privileges between 1270 and 1290; even after being placed under interdict in 1283, the city only relented when its *studium* was threatened with closure.¹⁷⁹ Mussato does not explicitly reject priestly authority, but Marsilius of Padua in 1324 repudiated the distinct superiority of the clerical class, arguing that the 'prudentes' should rule, while Marsilius' friend John of Jandun described philosophers, or *speculativi*, as people whose greater prudence meant they ought to replace priests as those responsible for leading others to virtue.¹⁸⁰ Indeed, Giovannino's initial decision to preach his homily on the arts suggests a concern about the encroachments of a form of secularism that was subjecting Scripture to the inquiries of the Arts Faculty.¹⁸¹ Despite Mussato's prominent role in Paduan politics, however, his vision of poetry, in which the ethical is subordinate to the aesthetic, does not rely on an explicitly civic

¹⁷⁷ Mussato could have encountered in numerous sources the ideas about prudence discussed earlier (in Ch. 1, pp. 42ff. and Ch. 4, pp. 132ff.). In addition to Cicero and Isidore, similar ideas were present in the most popular late-medieval treatise on the virtues, William Peraldus' *Summa de virtutibus et vitiis*, and in Geremia of Montagnone's *Compendium*, which cited Ps-Seneca's *Formula vitae honestae* (written in the sixth century by Martin of Braga): Q. Skinner, *Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Artist as Political Philosopher* (London, 1986), pp. 5–6, 26. Brunetto Latini's *Li livres dou tresor*, ed. S. Baldwin and P. Barrette (Tempe, AZ, 2003), had a lengthy discussion of prudence and its pre-eminence (II.56), as well as its discernment of the eternal within transient variety (II.58–9). Dante, in his *Convivio* (c.1306), discussed prudence's role as wise counsel, not only a moral but an intellectual virtue: ed. P. Cudini (Milan, 1980) IV.17, 27.

¹⁷⁸ For further elements of Pietro's thought, as well as of Paduan lay life, which have bearing on Mussato, see Marangon, *Ad cognitionem*, pp. 378ff.

¹⁷⁹ N. Rubinstein, 'Marsilius of Padua and Italian Political Thought of his Time', in J. R. Hale et al. (eds), *Europe in the Late Middle Ages* (Evanston, IL, 1965), p. 47.

¹⁸⁰ For Marsilius, see G. Moreno-Riaño and C. Nederman, 'Marsilius of Padua's Principles of Secular Politics', in Moreno-Riaño and Nederman (eds), *Companion to Marsilius*, p. 132. For John, see Murray, *Reason*, pp. 267–70, and the passages cited in L. Schmugge, *Johannes von Jandun (1285/89–1328)* (Stuttgart, 1966), p. 73 nn. 155–7.

¹⁸¹ Marangon, *Alle origini*, p. 170. Cf. p. 205 n. 74.

orientation. Mussato certainly believed in that civic orientation, as his coronation, his history-writing, and his own political involvement attest.¹⁸² Ultimately, though, whatever authority Mussato saw himself deriving from the coronation he grounded on the application of poetry's rhetorically persuasive powers to personal guidance in the face of misfortune.

Mussato's model of prophecy therefore reflects, not an Augustinian concern with sacred history, but rather a Boethian concern with the experience of history as the flux of time and Fortune. Mussato's acute awareness of temporal vicissitudes is evident in his 1317 elegy, *De celebratione suae diei nativitatis fienda, vel non* ('On whether to celebrate his birthday or not'),¹⁸³ in which Mussato may have been the first person since antiquity to consider a birthday celebration, measuring years in relation to his identity.¹⁸⁴ Mussato's awareness of the passage of time in his life leads him to ask the titular question; he has suffered much at the hands of cruel Fortune ('saeva Fortuna'), so a birthday is of uncertain celebratory worth.¹⁸⁵ The next year, 1318, would see Mussato sent into exile due to his political allegiances, and it would give rise to the *cento* he composed out of verses from Ovid's *Tristia* (itself a poem of exile), revealing the same despair that Boethius had undergone in his own fall from grace.¹⁸⁶ Unlike Proba's *cento* and many others throughout the medieval period, Mussato's *cento* is not written as a prediction. Based on introspection and a survey of his experience, Mussato reordered Ovid's words to make sense of his own personal situation. He clearly hoped poetry would provide consolation.¹⁸⁷ This use of a *cento* reveals the mixed conception of poetic-prophecy which Mussato retained from his earlier debate with Giovannino: Proba's work might be evidence of pagan predictive powers, but what was ultimately more important for Mussato was making sense of the flux of time, the ordering of his own history into a Boethian vision that offered consolation or built up strength against adversity. This is, in the end, what Mussato means by 'theological'

¹⁸² Both Mussato's *De gestis Italicorum post Henricum VII Caesarem*, written in prose, and the poetic tragedy *Ecerinis* offered *exempla* for political life.

¹⁸³ *HR*, fasc. 7, pp. 81–3.

¹⁸⁴ Witt claims the birthday idea resulted in the 'intensifying [of Mussato's] consciousness of the association between the course of his life and the flow of human history': *Footsteps*, p. 118.

¹⁸⁵ *De celebratione*, p. 82.

¹⁸⁶ *Centio ex De Tristibus*, in *HR*, fasc. 7, pp. 90–8. For the causes of Mussato's exile, during which he would die in 1329, see Coccia and Piron, 'Poésie', p. 574.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. the role of *ordo* and reordering in Trevet's Psalm commentary, discussed in Ch. 2.

poetry: writing that reveals a purposeful prophetic insight into divine providence and expresses it through the music of metre.

VI. CONCLUSION

Mussato's struggles to discern a guiding principle amidst the vicissitudes of his political fortunes may have been one of the reasons for his turn towards more traditional religious poetry at the end of his life. Like Boethius, Mussato found his old convictions no longer a support once he had been exiled and was without his former standing. From around 1321, penitent over his earlier neglect of Christianity, he began composing works that eschewed overtly classical references and style, in favour of simpler, more devotional poems. Witt points to these poems as evidence for early humanism's inability to synthesize the classical and the Christian, and he calls them a 'conscious rejection of Lovato's poetic heritage'.¹⁸⁸ Mussato's explicit recantations certainly reframe his earlier assertions that poetry had access to a universal revelation and that poetry's musicality was independent of its precise content. He did persist in writing poetry, calling on the Holy Spirit for aid, but it was without the confidence of a poetic theologian. For instance, Mussato's Soliloquy 5, 'Laudes crucis Domini nostri Iesu Christi', insists in no uncertain terms that the Muses simply cannot speak about the Cross.¹⁸⁹ Indeed, in this later poetry, Mussato even begins to sound like his former critic Giovannino:

Vain fable has fallen from my mind
and I leave aside gods and goddesses worshipped in error
who lie prone alongside despised posterity.¹⁹⁰

When Mussato explicitly speaks of prophecy in one of his later works, therefore, it is striking that he returns to a traditional Christian expression of its significance: among the Jews arose prophets (*prophetae*) who foretold (*praedixere*) of the new light that would come.¹⁹¹ All of this is a marked

¹⁸⁸ Witt, *Footsteps*, p. 160. Witt says Petrarch is the first to fully attempt a synthesis. Recantation was not unusual for medieval poets concerned with secular subjects: K. Brownlee et al., 'Vernacular Literary Consciousness c.1100–c.1500', in *CHLC*, p. 441. It was definitely a literary trope, but one which seems consistent with the direction of Mussato's life and works.

¹⁸⁹ *HR*, fasc. 7, p. 107.

¹⁹⁰ Soliloquy 3, 'Ad Beatam Virginem Mariam', in *HR*, fasc. 7, p. 103: 'Decidit ex animo fabula vana meo | Et cultos errore Deos omitto Deasque | Qui cum despecta posteritate iacent'.

¹⁹¹ *Peroratio cum recommendatione articulorum Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, in *HR*, fasc. 7, p. 114.

turn away from his own past utterances. In his later life, Mussato continues to be a *vates*, a poet, but one who makes no claims to sacred authority. He still recognizes that the Holy Spirit could inspire a poet (*vates*) to sing like the prophets ('sicut sancti cecinere Prophetæ').¹⁹² But Mussato's assertion that poetry is a unique form of prophetic inspiration, one that grants theological knowledge which stands above ecclesiastical authority, has now shrunk to a more traditional plea for wisdom and skill.

Nonetheless, the dissemination of Mussato's earlier confrontations with his critics gave impetus to subsequent generations of humanists to make claims for poetry and the sacred authority that accompanied it. This was the long-term significance of his work. The prophet need not root his vision in sacred history in order to claim true inspiration. In his polemical writings, at least, Mussato identified the modes of poetry and Scripture so closely that poetry and prophecy became indistinguishable. Less important than predictions about sacred history were the philosophical *and* theological truths that poetry conveyed. These deeper realities, however, were articulated less as doctrine than as singing and music, and with this music, consolation. The profound influence of Seneca and Boethius united Mussato's ideas of prophecy, tragedy, and music into a poetic theology characterized by revelation of the *ratio* of Creation, a combination of wisdom and delight. In this sense, Mussato's poetic theology was fundamentally and deliberately 'prophetic', in that, like the *Consolation of Philosophy*, it sought an eternal insight into the flux of time.

Mussato's theories were rooted in some scholastic models but not all. On the one hand, Dominican post-Incarnation prophecy was concerned with clarity and doctrinal teaching, whereas Mussato evoked mystery and musicality separate from doctrine. In this regard, it was Boethius who offered Mussato the same thing Hugh of St Victor had urged—access to a special prophetic vision of the world through a form of contemplation. But Boethius also allowed Mussato to remain unconcerned with the events of Scripture's sacred history. On the other hand, developments in theology, again largely Dominican, were pushing the boundaries of contemporary inspiration far beyond its original sacramental or episcopal forms into *studium*. For Aquinas, any speech connected with the exposition of Scripture could have the mark of prophecy because the Holy Spirit was still at work, inspiring understanding of the text. For Mussato, any utterance connected with music could be sacred, since the Spirit was at

¹⁹² Soliloquy 2, 'Ad Spiritum sanctum', in *HR*, fasc. 7, p. 101. 'Now I have taken up courage, when you breathe (*spires*) wherever you wish, | To weave (*texere*) words about you with your aid, | With your mouth, just as the holy Prophets sang: | And so you can hand on metres to your bard (*vates*)'.

work in it. Poetry, as well as prophecy, consisted of a certain form of wisdom, rather than prediction. Mussato also evoked the same role for poets as did Humbert of Romans for his preachers: the inspired *vates* relying on prudence to offer guidance to people. It was no great leap for humanists to take up this broad intellectual mantle, while simultaneously refashioning it into their own elite form of authority.

Conclusion

Twenty-five years after Albertino Mussato's coronation and debate with Giovannino of Mantua, Petrarch declared during his own laureation in Rome in 1341 that, since the poet's task was to stimulate others to study of the arts, 'I am venturing to offer myself as guide for this toilsome and dangerous path', a role which required not just learning but 'a certain inner and divinely given energy...infused in the poet's (*vates*) spirit'.¹ The placement of prophecy within a broad stream of inspiration, along with the development of *studium* as a new form of authority to rival the sacramental and the institutional, converged in the fourteenth-century debates over poetic theology, taken up by key figures in the humanist movement. Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Salutati used the elevation of poetry as a way to establish the status of the *studia humanitatis*. Their arguments were not identical, but they were all indebted to an expanded notion of inspiration.² Rather than merely repeating classical principles of poetry and oration, humanists needed to account for the workings of the Holy Spirit. To claim vatic authority for poets, they absorbed the category of prophet, not as oracular predictor but as prudent moral guide, as bearer of wisdom and of consolation in the face of uncertainty or suffering. These new *vates* contemplated and transmitted divine truths in elevated, eloquent language, as new preachers and teachers.³

¹ *Collatio laureationis*, ed. C. Godi, 'La "Collatio laureationis" del Petrarca nelle due redazioni', *Studi petrarcheschi*, n.s. 5 (1988), p. 41: 'me in tam laborioso et michi quidem pericoloso calle ducem prebere non expavi'; p. 31: 'interna quadam et divinitus in animum vatis infusa vi'; trans. E. H. Wilkins, in *Studies in the Life and Works of Petrarch* (Cambridge, MA, 1955), Appendix, pp. 301, 306.

² Witt argues for a distinction between 'sacral' and 'sacred' poetry, asserting that Petrarch and Boccaccio promoted the former because they did not claim that poets received direct divine inspiration but rather worked through a 'divinely infused power', although the source of their truths was natural: R. Witt, 'Coluccio Salutati and the Conception of the *Poeta Theologus* in the Fourteenth Century', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 30 (1977), pp. 542–5. Witt's use of the term 'sacral' gestures at the broad notion of inspiration traced in this book. Witt does not, however, address the issue of Christian poets, whom Petrarch believed had access to supernatural truths.

³ Cf. Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium*, ed. V. Zaccaria, *Tutte le opere* 7–8 (Milan, 1998) XIV.7.

The 'secular' prophecy of lay intellectuals insisted on a sacred element at its source, albeit one no longer tied to the prefigurative historical events of Scripture. Through the beauty of music, artificial rearrangement, and mysterious language, and through an understanding of the vicissitudes of fortune, the humanist poet-prophet offered consolation.⁴ The virtue of prudence lay beneath such claims, not as a vision of sacred history or a natural discernment of political choices, but rather as an inspired insight into the workings of the divine. As contemporary Christian poets, furthermore, humanists such as Petrarch could incorporate Christian doctrine into their work, offering guidance on sacred truths—as well as the will to live out those truths—more eloquently than professional theologians.⁵ The contemporary humanist *vates* integrated gift and talent as a conveyor of divine truths in a new way.⁶

During the thirteenth century the Dominican scholastic model turned away from the spontaneous visionary, the unlearned or unknowing prophet. Prophecy converged, in that model, with theological reflection itself. 'Poetic theology' therefore had little trouble articulating itself as poetic prophecy as well. Both Petrarch and Boccaccio, like Mussato, argued that poetry embraced all the liberal arts, assuming the role of theology.⁷ Thus, Boccaccio's ancient *vates*, like Peter Lombard's, relied not on madness or prediction but on 'vis mentis', close to a natural intellectual and creative talent, true of both contemporaries and ancients.⁸ Interpretation of prophetic words required similarly special expertise. Both poets and Old Testament prophets spoke in mysteries that would not immediately be understood.⁹ For the learned reader, poetry served a purpose similar to Scripture in the delight it could bring through its

⁴ Petrarch repeated Mussato's argument about the healing power of Philosophy's poetic Muses in *De consolazione philosophiae: Invective contra medicum*, ed. D. Marsh (Cambridge, MA, 2003) I.34. For consolation as a central theme in Petrarch's work, see G. McClure, *Sorrow and Consolation in Italian Humanism* (Princeton, NJ, 1990), pp. 30–72.

⁵ Petrarch insisted, against scholastic dialectic and philosophy, on the superiority of poetic theology as 'best fitted for the pursuit of the Christian goal of salvation and the cure of souls': C. Trinkaus, *The Poet as Philosopher: Petrarch and the Formation of Renaissance Consciousness* (New Haven, CT, 1979), pp. 90, 96, 108. Cf. Petrarch's *Contra medicum* III.126–7, 146ff.

⁶ Witt asks how any talent can be other than 'God-given' ('Coluccio Salutati', p. 544), but thirteenth-century debates over the interplay of talent and gift (especially with regard to preaching) show that there were various ways of emphasizing a prophetic role, even with 'natural' activities or talents: see, e.g., Ch. 3, pp. 98ff.

⁷ Petrarch, *Le senili*, ed. U. Dotti, iii (Turin, 2010) XV.11.1; Boccaccio, *Genealogie* XIV.7.

⁸ *Genealogie* XIV.7. Boccaccio actually contrasts pagan *vates* with Old Testament prophets, who were directly inspired by the Holy Spirit: *Genealogie* XIV.8.

⁹ *Genealogie* XIV.12. Cf. *Genealogie* XIV.7, where Boccaccio distinguishes poetry's obscurity from rhetoric's clarity.

obscurities, which kept its truths from those not ready to grasp them.¹⁰ Indeed, Petrarch even argued that poetry, *unlike* Scripture, was meant for the very few.¹¹ Those responsible for preserving and teaching the deepest truths of the faith, like the *maiores* of the Old Testament, were now the masters of poetry, not exegetes or speculative theologians.¹²

Eventually, the implications of this humanist reversal became clearer. Petrarch in particular confirmed for humanism the centrality of reassessing and challenging scholastic methods and priorities. If true wisdom were to be found, he believed, the current authorities and hierarchy of disciplines had to be overthrown.¹³ Indeed, by the end of the fourteenth century, Giovanni Dominici, a member of the reformist Observant branch of the Dominican order, attacked precisely what he perceived as the elitism of humanist authority. If humanists asserted that poetry was the best bearer of theological knowledge, the best way to encounter the divine Word, then, Dominici believed, they undermined a tradition of scriptural exegesis which promoted clarity and accessibility in the literal sense of Scripture.¹⁴ Humanists were, in Dominici's mind, arrogating for themselves the right to interpret and dispense that theological knowledge with their own methods.

Fourteenth-century medieval intellectual and religious culture still contained all the prophetic strands that were present in the twelfth century. Those strands, however, were now being reconfigured for new groups, and not as a straightforward dichotomy between institutional and lay authority. While humanists used prophecy to endow *studium* with sacred authority, a reaction against the rise of *studium* in the spiritual life also took hold. Lay mystics and visionaries, often women, asserted the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, supported by theologians who looked to rapture as providing the best access to the divine.¹⁵ Such direct access was central to mystics' justification for their status as elite prophets. This sort of mysticism was different from the Victorine combination of

¹⁰ *Genealogie* XIV.12.

¹¹ Petrarch, *Contra medicum* III.134–6.

¹² On *maiores*, see Ch. 2, pp. 84–5.

¹³ Riccardo Fubini strongly emphasizes the importance for humanism of this aspect of Petrarchan thought: 'Renaissance Humanism and its Development in Florentine Civic Culture', in J. Woolfson (ed.), *Palgrave Advances in Renaissance Historiography* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 123–4.

¹⁴ A. Reltgen-Tallon: 'L'observance dominicaine et son opposition à l'humanisme: L'exemple de Jean Dominici', in P. Gilli (ed.), *Humanisme et église en Italie et en France méridionale* (Rome, 2004), pp. 59–62. For Dominici's arguments, see *Lucula noctis*, ed. E. Hunt (Notre Dame, IN, 1940).

¹⁵ A. Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, trans. M. Schneider (Notre Dame, IN, 1993), pp. 231–3; A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. J. Birrell (New York, 1997), p. 407. Cf. Ch. 4, pp. 122–3.

contemplation and study which gave rise to a *spiritus intelligentiae*; it was not grounded in the learning of and meditation on scriptural patterns of history. In fact, prophetic, charismatic experience was promoted—and accepted—in so far as it did *not* attempt to be learned.¹⁶ There were, to be sure, visionaries who continued to deliberately cultivate contemplative experiences of God. Such visions were not to be confused with spontaneous ones, that is, ones that might seem prophetic.¹⁷ These visions were private, intimate, and devotional only.¹⁸

The new spontaneous prophetic mode, in contrast, was often public, and with political and moral bearing, especially when it adopted an admonitory role (*prophetia comminationis*) for immediate practical action, and when it did so without introducing Joachimist themes of a new age's imminent arrival.¹⁹ The crises besetting sacred authority, engendered by the Avignon papacy (1309–78) and then by the Western Schism (1378–1417), allowed other elite prophets to flourish outside official structures of power. Catherine of Siena, for instance, became more explicitly focused on the need for immediate reform of ecclesiastical governance.²⁰ Her prophecy offered criticism of and guidance to the Church at the highest levels of power. By the end of the fourteenth century, ecclesiastical tensions created more space for critical voices to confront ecclesiastical authorities.²¹

Clerics who felt the absence of a prophetic stream in the Church—or rather, the ordinariness of that stream—ultimately encouraged the rise of these extraordinary visionaries and prophets. They were resisting the sort of prophetic gift based on *studium* which was promoted in papal Avignon. Indeed, opposition to forms of inspiration that appeared too mundane or secular characterized the fourteenth-century reformist Observance

¹⁶ Vauchez, *Laity*, pp. 234–6. Vauchez points to Bridget of Sweden's scorn for the learned culture of her day, and her rejection of her own merits as in any way the cause of her visions: *Saints*, p. 407.

¹⁷ See B. Newman, 'What Did It Mean to Say "I Saw"?: The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture', *Speculum*, 80 (2005), pp. 36–43, who cites in particular the example of Geert Groote (d.1384) and the beginnings of *devotio moderna*.

¹⁸ Jean Gerson (1363–1429), for instance, accepted the possibility of post-apostolic revelation, i.e. of *new* revelation. But, even if it were confirmed by Scripture or tradition, such revelation only created an obligation to believe it for those individuals who received it: N. C. Hvidt, *Christian Prophecy* (Oxford, 2007), p. 196.

¹⁹ C. Leonardi, 'Committenze agiografiche nel Trecento', in V. Moleta (ed.), *Patronage and Public in the Trecento* (Florence, 1986), p. 53. For prophecy as admonition, see the Introduction, p. 15.

²⁰ C. Leonardi, 'Intellectuals and Hagiography in the Fourteenth Century', in P. Boitani and A. Torti (eds), *Intellectuals and Writers in Fourteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 17–18.

²¹ Leonardi, 'Committenze agiografiche', pp. 53, 56–7.

movements within both Franciscan *and* Dominican Orders.²² The confrontation of Giovanni Dominici of the Dominican Observance with Coluccio Salutati at the end of the fourteenth century showed how spiritual reformers found little common ground with humanist culture. What these groups did share, however, was the sense of a failure in the usual institutional structures of the Church. For clerics dismayed at divisions within the Church, special visionaries had become necessary because divine grace was no longer communicated by the usual channels. For humanists, the intellectual and cultural framework of scholastic theology no longer communicated true Christian values. Prophecy—with its multiple threads reworked and rewoven—thus remained at the heart of medieval thinking about the presence of the sacred in language, time, and the movement of history, on the cusp of the Renaissance.

²² Vauchez, *Sainthood*, p. 409.

APPENDIX

Categories of Vision and Prophecy

I. AUGUSTINE, *DE GENESI AD LITTERAM* XII.7

Three types of *visio*:

- corporeal (*corporalis*) = vision with the eyes
- spiritual (*spiritualis*) = mental vision of images
- intellectual (*intellectualis*) = comprehension of the vision

II. THOMAS AQUINAS, *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE* II-II 173.A2–3

Four levels of *prophetia*:

- instinct (*instinctus*) = inspired actions that guide people
- intellectual (natural) (*intellectualis*) = enhanced knowledge of natural truths
- imaginary (*imaginaria*) = mental vision of images
- intellectual (supernatural) (*intellectualis*) = comprehension of divine mysteries

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